“BEEN THERE BEFORE”: MENTORSHIPS INVOLVING UNDERGRADUATE BLACK MALES AND THEIR BLACK MALE MENTORS AT PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

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Eric D. Williams

"BEEN THERE BEFORE": MENTORSHIPS INVOLVING UNDERGRADUATE BLACK MALES AND THEIR MENTORS AT PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore college mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentors as a means to understand how such mentorships function at predominately-White institutions (PWIs). Researchers have often examined the experiences of such mentorships through the lens of research that focuses on only one participant in the mentorship. Explorations of the unique functions of such mentorships that include social and career support are largely unexplored within the context of PWIs.

Through semi-structured one-on-one and shared mentor/mentee interviews, eight Black men who composed of five separate mentorships shared their narratives of participating in a mentorship at a PWI. The details of their experiences were analyzed through use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) theoretical perspective and counter-narrative methodology. The analysis produced a series of themes that described their shared experience at predominately-White institution. The themes included how we define our mentoring; the campus is not made for us; I have been there before; conceptions of Blackness and manhood; and cultural borderland crossing.

The Findings of this study revealed that Black males participating in Black-male mentorships define their mentorships through unique aspects of care. Additionally, the participants within the mentorships revealed and shared with one another feelings and experiences of racism and hostility at their PWIs. Likewise, the mentors and mentees in the mentorships shared a mutual understanding with one another due to common experiences as

Black males. The mentorship experiences also provided opportunities to share their conceptions of Blackness and manhood. Finally, the mentorship experiences provided opportunities to share survival/coping strategies for Black males at PWIs. This study also includes recommendations institutional support and future research.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Undergraduate Black males who attend Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) demonstrate the ability to practice resilience, possess grit (Strayhorn, 2013), and are able to succeed in the face of adversity (Harper, 2009). Despite these inherit strengths, Black men who attend PWIs achieve success in environments where many report experiences of racism, and face the difficult and unfair challenge of adapting to what is a hostile and unwelcoming environment (Bridges, 2011; Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998, 1999; Hurtado, Milem). Consequently, these hostile environments negatively impact the social experiences and academic outcomes of many Black males who attend such institutions (Robertson & Mason, 2008). Cropper (2000) explained that "while some Black students are achieving well despite the structural difficulties outlined, many are not, which indicates that there is a real need for cultural and structural changes within institutions" (p. 601).

Simultaneously, Black men at PWI participate in mentorships that some researchers argue supports their social and academic college experience (Mason, 2008; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008;). Such studies argue that mentored Black students routinely outperform non-mentored Black students in relation to performance and college persistence (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Strayhorn, 2008;). In regards to psychosocial impact, some observers (Brown, 2009; Dahlvig, 2010; Grant-Thompson & Atkinson, 1997; Ray, Carley, & Brown, 2009; Robertson & Mason, 2008) argue that mentorships help Black males counteract negative experiences and behavior directed toward them due to false perceptions/attitudes of Black males held by society. This evidence suggests that positive and supportive experiences with older and more experienced individuals, such faculty and staff , through mentorships assist Black men with

developing adaptive skills in hostile PWIs environments (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Moore & Toliver, 2010).

Like mentorships experiences in other environmental settings, higher education researchers suggest that collegiate mentorships typically involve two functional support areas: psychosocial and career support (Allen, 2003; Crisp, 2009; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). Kram (1983), who conducted extensive research on mentoring within businesses and organizations, describes psychosocial support as including role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling and friendship; while career support includes sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection and challenge. This concept describes support within the relationship from one direction—from the mentor to the mentee. However, viewing mentorships as a process in which the mentee is the sole beneficiary of support and the single focal point of the mentorship, without considering the impact of the experience on the mentor, does not provide the perspectives of both participants and, therefore, limits the ability understand the dyadic process in its entirety.

Furthermore, the nature of the mentoring process suggests that the activity within the mentoring dyad is a personal and reciprocal experience where the success of the relationship is dependent upon the actions of both the mentor and mentee (Allen, 2003; Crisp, 2009; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). Additionally, several conceptual variables involved in the dyadic relationship, including the participant's intent and level of involvement within the mentorship, influences the process for both participants (Mertz, 2004). Specifically, the intent of each participant is the perceived purpose of the mentorship, while the level of involvement is the perceived amount of time and effort required to realize or fulfill its purpose. Within dyadic mentorships, the intent of the participants is an indicator of the expectations of the activities to be

completed within the mentorship, as well as the desired outcomes of the mentorship; while the level of involvement indicates the amount of time and level of commitment necessary for the mentoring experience (Mertz, 2004). These variables are salient indicators of the perceived purpose, expectations and commitment within the relationship (Mertz, 2004). As such, within a mentorship these variables influence the dyad from both the mentor and mentee prospective.

In addition to the importance of the level of intent and involvement, research indicates that race, gender, social class, as well as predispositions and values are also factors within the dyad that can influence each participant's willingness to engage in the relationship (Helms, 1984, 1986). These particular personal characteristics are aspects that each individual brings into the mentorship with various degrees of similarities or difference. As such, the level of accepted indifference to such personal characteristics can influence the nature of the mentorship.

Furthermore, personal goals and needs, general feelings toward mentoring, the ability to thrive in relationships and cues regarding the importance and payoff of participating in a mentoring experience also influence each member's willingness to engage in the experience (Helms, 1984, 1986). These personal characteristics are brought into the dyadic relationship from both the mentor and mentee, and each can positively or negatively influence the success of the dyadic relationship (Young & Perrewé, 2000). For undergraduate Black males who interact with mentors from a wide variety of backgrounds at PWIs, understanding the influence that these variables and personal characteristics (e.g., race, gender, social class, etc.) have on the relationship is essential to better understanding the experiences of mentorships involving Black male mentees.

Additionally, early research of mentoring focused primarily on the outcomes of the mentee .Consequently, very little informed researchers about mentoring relationships from both

the mentee and the mentor's shared perspective in the mentorship (Mertz, 2004). Likewise, the literature of mentoring experiences involving undergraduate Black males also focused primarily on the experiences of the mentee. However, early research does indicate that mentorships develop on college campuses through formal or informal processes (Ragins, 1997, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Informal mentorships develop spontaneously, whereas the institutions intentionally establish formal mentorships. These mentorships typically develop through an organization or program as a means to provide support (Ragins, 1997, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

In relation to both informal and formal mentorships at PWIs, it is imperative to consider the institutions view and intent for the existence of mentorships involving undergraduate Black males. Specifically, it is vital to consider whether PWIs consider the existence of mentorships as the institutions' intentional effort to address the negative social and academic experiences that Black describe, or whether mentorships are simply a by-product of PWIs view that the social and academic experiences of Black males are their own individual and collective responsibility to fix. Likewise, it is significant to consider how the institutions view of such mentorships influence the perception of Black males and their mentors at PWIs. In this regard, higher education researchers and practitioners have much to understand about the mentorship experiences involving undergraduate Black males and their mentors at PWIs.

Statement of Problem

Blacks men at PWIs participate in mentorships that researchers belief positively impacts their social experience and academic performance (Sutton, 2006; Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). However, more could be understood regarding how these mentorships specifically provide them with academic and social support within the context of a PWI (Crisp, 2009; Crisp

& Cruz, 2009; Sutton, 2006; Jacobi, 1991). Researchers (Bridges, 2011; Robertson & Mason, 2008) contend that mentorships counteract feelings of isolation and hostility, as well as counteract society's negative perceptions/attitudes of Black males at PWIs. While such claims and evidence is important, it is also imperative to consider whether institutions further oppress and marginalize Black males through promoting the idea that the participation in mentorships are essential or necessary for their success. Similarly, further research could help determine whether participants in such mentorships view their experiences as mechanisms that counteract negative and false perceptions/attitudes held by society of Black males. As such, the literature does not reveal whether such outcomes are an intentional support function of the mentorship for both or either participant in the dyad.

The literature involving Black males at PWIs describe their social experiences and academic performances in the context of a hostile environment. Consequently, there is a need to question and explore why Black men should need mentorships to cope with institutional racism and campus hostility. As such, what level of responsibility and burden does PWIs place upon Black male mentors? It is important to explore whether mentorships at PWIs unfairly place the burden on Black male to resolve and overcome the environmental obstacles that PWIs present. Does mentorship relieve institutions of their responsibility of addressing the racial and systemic problems that exist within the institution?

Specifically, the structural problems that exist within PWIs include institutional racism, as well as social and economic inequities (Lynn, 2002; Morfin, Perez, Parker, 2005). As Solórzano and Yosso state, "educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower" (p. 26). In the case of mentorships involving undergraduate Black males at PWIs, it is important

to consider whether the existence and experience within such mentorships further oppress and marginalize them, or do such mentorships contribute to their emancipation and empowerment. Likewise, it is important to know the view of these concepts from both the mentor and the mentee in order to capture the full dynamic of the mentorship.

Finally, the literature reveals very little regarding how personal characteristics such as race and gender influence the mentorship. It is invaluable to understand how such factors influence the formation and success of mentorships involving Black male mentees and mentors. It is also important to understand how personal characteristics influence each participant's motivation and level of involvement within the mentorship (Campbell & Campbell, 1997, 2007; LaVant et al., 1997; Mertz, 2004; Ragins, 1997, 1999; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009). Likewise, it is imperative to know the aforementioned concepts with the inclusion of both participants' personal accounts and recorded experience in the mentorship (Brown, 2009; Campbell & Campbell, 1997, 2007; LaVant et al., 1997) . Such issues are important to explore when investigating the nature of mentorships involving undergraduate Black males at PWIs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore college mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and Black male mentors to better understand how such mentorships function at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The intent is to understand both of the participants' perspectives within this mentorship and learn more about the internal functions of the mentorship in regards to how it provide support to Black males at PWIs. The study aims to understand this dyadic relationship through narrative descriptions from both participants' perspectives, while

also providing a counter-narrative of the experience for both participants in the mentorship and a counter-narrative in relation to the purpose of mentorships involving Black males at PWIs.

The lack of literature that explores the shared experiences of mentored undergraduate Black males and their mentors at PWIs necessitates this study. A number of studies exist (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Allen & Poteet, 1999; Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000; Allen, 2003, 2007; Allen et al., 2005; Allen, Poteet, Russell, & Dobbins, 1997; Anderson & Shore, 2008; Crisp, 2009; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Eby, Buits, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004; Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000; Eby Butts, Durley, & Ragins, 2010) that look at college student mentoring. Additionally, several studies (Allen, 2003; Brown, 2009; Blount, 2011; LaVant et al., 1997; Lee, 1999; Sutton, 2006;) examine the mentoring of undergraduate Black males. However, very little research directly investigates mentoring dyads of undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentors at PWIs by analyzing the experiences from both ends of the dyad. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the literature of undergraduate Black males in higher education and potentially serve as an instrument that exposes biases and institutional racism at PWIs.

Research Questions

The following research question aims to examine the mentoring of undergraduate Black male student mentees and their mentors at PWIs:

- What are the mentoring experiences of undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentors at PWIs?

Additional questions of interest include:

- How do the participants define the nature of their mentorship?

- How do the participants perceive the images of Black males at their respective institution?
- How do the participants perceive the role of personal characteristics and identities, such as race (e.g., Blackness) and gender (e.g., manhood), within the mentorship?
- How do the participants perceive the knowledge exchanged within the mentorship?
- How do the participants perceive the function of the mentorship within the context of Predominately-White Institution (PWI)?

Methods

In order to answer the research questions and capture the unique attributes of each participant within the study, it necessary to capture the personal accounts of the mentees and their respective mentors both individually and collectively. Additionally, it is important to use a perspective and methodological tool that counters deficit story telling of undergraduate African American males. As a result, through using a qualitative paradigm this study used a critical race theoretical (CRT) perspective and CRT counter-narrative methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

CRT originated through the works of prominent law scholars, such as Derrick Bell among others, who were discontent with the slow pace of racial reform and who questioned claims of racial neutrality and objectivity (Hiraldo, 2010; Lynn, 2002). This theoretical perspective has commitment to the postmodernist challenge that calls for a re-engagement with formerly accepted and unquestioned notions regarding how we should come to understand knowledge and practice (Lynn, 2002). Black males are a historically oppressed and racially marginalized group as evidenced by the prevalence of racism and false negative stereotyping of Black males depicted throughout society and within higher education literature. Bell's (1992)

argued that society deeply embeds race and racism within the fabric of American society, and is apparent within structures, although often hidden from view. Higher education scholars have used this perspective while examining the experiences of Blacks in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Yosso (2005) defined CRT in education as "a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (p. 74). Moreover, a CRT "methodology in education challenges White privilege, rejects notions of neutral research or objective researchers, and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of color" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26). Additionally "critical race theorists have built on everyday experiences, viewpoints, and the power of stories and persuasion to come to a deeper understanding of how Americans see race" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 44). As such, CRT is concerned with telling a counter-narrative of previously held ideologies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Harper, 2009;). Critical race scholars in both education and law argue that critical research and theory (Lynn, 2002; Lynn & Dixson, 2013):

- offers a systematic critique of the legal and social system in the United States;
- calls attention to the enduring legacy of racism in past and contemporary American society;
- adopts a postmodern stance with regard to Western claims of neutrality, objectivity, rationality, and universality;
- is theoretically driven but experientially-based because of the extent to which it grounds its analysis within racialized narratives of peoples of color;
- is interdisciplinary because of its reliance on philosophical, historical, and sociological traditions in academe;

- and CRT calls for the elimination of racial oppression in the United States through a multilayered examination of race that explores the links between race, gender, and class.

Furthermore, Critical race theorists have a set of tenets that makeup the framework of the theoretical approach. For this study, I will focus primary on the following CRT tenets that include the following (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2013):

- Counter- narrative
- Racism is ordinary, not aberrational
- Whiteness is property
- Interest convergence
- Critique of liberalism and colorblindness
- Intersectionality

This study uses a critical race theoretical perspective to uncover misconceptions regarding Black males at PWIs. Furthermore, CRT counter-narrative methodology challenges the status quo of depicting the social experiences and academic performances of Black males at PWIs from a deficit lens. As such, CRT theoretical perspective applies the appropriate responsibility on the institutions with regard to the experiences and outcomes of undergraduate Black males at PWIs. Concerning mentorships involving Black males and their mentors, this research perspective guides the study and challenges unquestioned beliefs.

Literature Framework

This study uses three constructs to inform the framework of the literature. The first construct centers on the research of undergraduate Black males who attend PWIs. This area

includes the work of higher education researchers who explore and describe the experiences and conditions of Black males at PWIs. The second construct centers on the mentorship of undergraduate students in higher education. This construct describes what mentorships look like in higher education, who participates as mentors and mentees, and the desired outcomes of such relationships. The third construct centers on the components of the mentorship. Specifically, it examines the mentorship by exploring the mentor and mentee perspectives.

Definition of Terms

This study utilizes several terms. These definitions provide clarity regarding the meaning and use of these terms within this study:

- African American, Black – This study uses this term interchangeably. Whereas Black is an inclusive term to refer to those individuals who represent the African diaspora, while African-American specifically refers to those individuals who are migrants to the United States or descendants of African slaves in America.
- Dyad – This term describes two persons involved in an ongoing reciprocal relationship or interaction.
- Mentor – This study uses this term to indicate the senior member within a mentorship relationship who provides support and guidance to the mentee.
- Mentee– This term indicates the junior member in the mentorship relationship who receives support and guidance from the mentor.
- Mentoring – The support of one individual by another within a personal relationship developed through regular contact over time (Cropper, 2000).

Overview of Dissertation

This study contains five chapters. Chapter two summarizes the higher educational landscape for Black males and the need for interventional methods to improve performance and educational outcomes, the mentoring of undergraduates in higher education settings and the definitions and components of mentoring dyads. Chapter three describes the methodology used for this study. Specifically, it describes the site, participants and qualitative approach used in the study. Chapter four provides the results from the data collection (i.e., face-to-face interviews with Black male mentees and their respective mentors). Finally, chapter five presents the conclusions of the study. Specifically, it presents the findings and implications for practice in the field of higher education. It concludes with recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to explore college mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and mentors to better understand how such mentorships function at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). This chapter reviews literature from three construct areas: (1) Black males in higher education, (2) undergraduate mentorships in higher education and (3) dyadic mentorship experiences. The first construct area examines the conditions and experiences of undergraduate Black males in higher education. This area of the chapter discusses literature on Black males that include both historical and contemporary racial inequality factors that influence their academic and social experiences in higher education. Specifically, this section discusses these important factors in the context of the experiences of undergraduate Black males at PWIs, which include experiences of campus hostility, racial microaggressions and negative stereotyping (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Bonner, 2011; Vianden, Kuykendall, Mock, & Korb, 2012). In addition, this section underlines Black masculinity as an important factor when discussing the experiences of undergraduate Black males at PWIs (Bridges, 2011; Grantham & Ford, 2003; Harris, 1995; Harper, 2004; Howard-Hamilton, 1997; Parham & Helms, 1985; Ogbu, 2004; Cooper, 2005; Majors & Billson, 1992).

The second construct area discusses the literature involving undergraduate mentorships in higher education. This section of the chapter presents an overview of the literature on mentoring in higher education as it relates to its use on university and college campuses. This section also includes literature related to the definition and functional areas of mentoring in higher education (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992;; Crisp, 2009; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; Nora & Crisp, 2007;Philip & Hendry, 2000), along with the types mentorship models practiced in higher

education. Finally, this section discusses the mentorship of undergraduate Black males who attends PWIs (Blackwell, 1987, 1989; Brown, 2009; Cropper, 2000; Dahlvig, 2010; Freeman, 1999b; Grant-Thompson & Atkinson, 1997; LaVant et al., 1997; Lee, 1991; Lee, 1999; Sutton, 2006; Wallace, Abel, & Ropers-Huilman, 2000; Zell, 2011).

The third construct area reviews mentorship as a dyadic relationship that describes the unique dynamics and characteristics of the process. Specifically, this section of the chapter explores the undercurrents of the dyadic relationship between the mentor and mentee from the perspectives of both participants. Correspondingly, this section discusses variables that influence the mentorship dyad, such as dyadic phases and models, mutuality, interpersonal support, race/gender matching, cultural/social capital and generativity (Allen, 2003, 2007; Campbell & Campbell, 1997, 2007; Eby et al., 2004; Eby et al., 2010; Kram, 1983, 1988; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Mertz, 2004). Finally, in relation to Black mentees and their mentors at PWIs, this chapter discusses a review of these characteristics within the mentorship dyad. These three main areas within this chapter form the conceptual framework for this study.

Black Males at PWIs

Black Males in Higher Education. In recent years, higher education researchers have chronicled the lived experiences of Black males in higher education through a vast array of lenses. Since the end of slavery and the dawn of the 20th century, Black males have sought higher education despite the boundaries of White supremacy, racism and discrimination (Gavins, 2009). Prior to increased access to PWIs (Gavins, 2009), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were largely the primary option for Black students seeking a postsecondary education (Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Palmer & Wood, 2012). Although increased access was initially characterized as tool sought to increase racial equity for Black students, "by

1980 though, only some 11% of young Black men had received four years of college compared to 25.5% of young White men" (Gavins, 2009, p. 14). Although these numbers improved since the 1980s, on average, Black males are still not enrolling or graduating at a rate comparable to their White peers (Harper, 2006a). Harper et al. (2009) argued, "the recurrent struggle for racial equity is surprising, given the number of policies that have been enacted to close college opportunity gaps between Black and their White counterparts at various junctures throughout the history of higher education" (p. 389).

A more than ample amount of literature negatively portrays Black men in college as a student demographic that is less likely to enroll and obtain their degrees in postsecondary institutions than other racial and gender demographics (Allen, 1992; Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Garibaldi, 1992; Stiff-Williams, 2007). Thus, the overwhelming literature on Black men in college is deficit-focused and mistakenly and unfairly concentrates attention on the academic performance of Black males in higher education in comparison to other racial/ethnic and gender groups. The literature frequently concentrates on what some scholars describe as the achievement gap (Stiff-Williams, 2017).

Although examining factors that are responsible for differences in academic performance can arguably provide insight into the challenges faced by undergraduate Black males, Horsford and Grosland (2013) contends that "the majority of research on the achievement gap has concentrated on test score variance between Black and White students, while ignoring the history of racial exclusion, segregation and discrimination in U.S. schools" (p. 156). Likewise, the over amplified attention on Black men from this deficit perspective ignores the achievements and accomplishments of Black men in college who achievements merit greater attention (Harper, 2009). Consequently, the focus on the achievement gap actually concentrates attention on the

perceived failure of Black men in college instead of their academic achievements (Harper, 2009; Horsford & Grosland, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2009). Moreover, this approach places the blame on the shoulders of Black men rather than the institutionalized racist structures that they must overcome (Horsford & Grosland, 2013).

Baldwin, Fisler and Patton (2009) explained that "problems on many college campuses are linked to the status and perceptions of Black men in society as a whole, lack of financial assistance, inadequate learning and supportive environments and insufficient culturally appealing venues for student engagement" (p. 181). Likewise, throughout the educational pipeline Black students are less likely to have access to quality teaching, more likely to face low expectations and less likely to receive equitable per student funding compared to White students (Flores, 2007). These inequities place Black men at an educational disadvantage.

Consequently, emphasizing the gaps in opportunity that Black students experience is more suitable. Thus, the term 'opportunity gap' is a more fitting way to reframe the misleading term 'achievement gap' that is misleading and does not place enough emphasis on the inequities and disparities in the educational pipeline (Da Silva, Huguley, Kakli, & Rao, 2007; Flores, 2007; Rendon, 1998; Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008; Tienken & Zhao, 2013). Furthermore, opportunity gap takes into account the idea that ignoring non-cognitive factors, such as psychological and social factors (e.g., peer pressure, resistance, stereotype threat) (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008), and examining the data on undergraduate Black males without taking into context the historical and contemporary challenges of racial discrimination and inequities can lead researchers to incorrect interpretations (Howard, 2008; Patton, McEwen, Rendón, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007).

Likewise, comparing the academic performances of undergraduate Black males to other student groups without placing the data into proper historical and contemporary context only helps to perpetuate the negative stereotypes within society that depict Black men as dangerous, lazy and intellectually inferior (Harper, 2009; Horsford & Grosland, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2009). Furthermore, failing to place the data into proper context leads to the false belief that Black men are the source of their own problems, and therefore must solely bear the burden to change and adjust in order to succeed in higher education.

Horsford and Grosland (2013) proclaimed, "The field of education proves[s] no exception to the reproduction of this myth of Black inferiority" (p. 153). Similarly, Harper (2009) argued that almost everything published about collegiate Black males negatively portrays them as underachieving and unlikely to succeed, which leads to stereotypes and believed notions of Black male inferiority (Ford et al., 2008; Harper, 2009). These stereotypes perpetuate the false impression that all Black males in college are academically unprepared for college and underperforming in schools due to their inferiority and lack of assimilation (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Harper, 2009; Harper & Nichols, 2008).

In reality, Black males in college represent a heterogeneous group with diverse backgrounds, abilities and academic outcomes. Although Black males in college often come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, many also come from affluent middle and upper middle-income backgrounds. Likewise, a large contingent of literature exists that indicates that many Black men earn high academic achievement (Harper, 2006b; Horsford & Grosland, 2013). Despite the diversity in background and performance, much of society and a portion of higher education literature still describe Black men from the lens of inferiority and deficit (Ford et al., 2008; Harper, 2009; Harper & Davis, 2012; Harper & Nichols, 2008; Horsford & Grosland,

2013). As mentioned, such focus only perpetuates the false, negative stereotypes of Black that already exist at large. The impact of these false, negative stereotypes of Black males are far more daunting for those individuals who attend PWIs where Black males are an underrepresented and often have less peer and faculty/staff support to combat the influence of negative stereotypes (Cuyjet, 1997, 2006; Dahlvig, 2010; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Stiff-Williams, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008).

Experiences at PWIs. Historically, Black students fought for the opportunity to participate in all forms of formal education (Fleming, 1985; Freeman, 1999a). Centuries of slavery followed by 100 years of Jim Crow racial segregation and unfulfilled promises of desegregation and racial equity has excluded and marginalized Black students from the educational landscape (Fleming, 1985; Smith & Fleming, 2006; Williams, Ashley, & Rhea, 2009). With the exceptions of a small number of institutions in the 19th Century, such as Middlebury College, Dartmouth, Amherst, Bowdoin, and Oberlin, the nation completely excluded Black students from higher education (Smith & Fleming, 2006; Williams et al., 2009). Restrictive racist legislation and segregation prohibited African Americans from attending any other institution during that era (Freeman, 1999a; Smith & Fleming, 2006). The first HBCUs were established in the 1850s and the American Missionary Association established additional HBCUs following the Civil War with the goal to educate Black Americans (Williams et al., 2009). It was not until the 1970s that more Black Americans began to attend PWIs (Harper et al., 2009).

Harper et al. (2009) contended that increased college enrollment and as well as other college access advancements gained during the 1960s and 1970s were not solely due to the change in American attitudes toward racial equality and opportunity, but due to increased state

and federal financial aid, such as Federal Pell Grants and Federal Student Loans. Changes in the law, combined with the financial incentives created in the 1960s and 1970s, provided enough incentive for PWIs to compete with HBCUs for the best and brightest Black students to acquire the state and federal funds that accompanied their enrollment.

Harper et al. (2009) argument supported the concept of interest-convergence introduced by Bell (1980), which is a key concept in critical race theory. Bell (1980) argued that changes in law and policy, such as the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) decision was not the result of a moral breakthrough in America, rather Bell argued that “the interests of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interest of Whites” (p. 523). As such, circumstances created a space in time in which it became the self-interest of PWIs to recruit and enroll more Black students.

By 1986, only 20% of Black students enrolled in post-secondary institutions attended HBCUs (Freeman, 1999a; Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Freeman & Brown II, 2005). These statistics unveils the idea that the financial incentives, combined with false negative images of HBCUs, are as much responsible for PWIs’ increased recruitment of Black students as the idea of a sudden change in attitude toward social justice and equality. However, this idea does not solely explain institutional choice by Black students.

Historically a number of factors exist that determine Black students choice as to where to attend college. Two decades ago McDonough, Antonio and Trent (1997) indicated that students made choices based on their access to information through “gatekeepers’, which included counselors, teachers and admission officers. The results also indicated that the students’ religion, the college’s reputation, and relatives’ desires were the top reasons why students chose HBCUs, while athletic recruitment, the desire to be near home, and the believed institutional academic

reputation of PWIs, in comparison to the false, negative reputations of HBCUs were the top reasons why students chose to attend PWIs.

Additionally, Freeman (1999a) used a three-phase (i.e., predisposition, search, choice) college choice model developed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987) to understand Black students' considerations in college choice. The results indicated that Black students who attended private predominately-White high schools were more likely to choose HBCUs or prestigious PWIs. These students reported a desire for a greater connection to the Black community. In contrast, Black students who attended predominately-Black high schools reported that they were strongly considering PWIs. Although this study indicated that Black students often seek HBCUs for social and cultural value purposes, proximity to home, financial affordability and academic reputation played greater factors in determining their college choice (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Freeman & Brown II, 2005; Scott, 2014).

In the regard, although a large portion of Black students still choose to attend HBCUs over PWIs, HBCUs are negatively stigmatized and stereotyped as inferior institutions by media outlets in comparison to PWIs (Gasman, 2007). Such stereotypes contribute to the perception that PWIs provide a superior education for Black students; however, HBCUs do a better job at educating Black students, particularly Black males, in relation to their academic achievement and level of college satisfaction (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Palmer & Wood, 2012; Robert, Davis, & Dina, 2010).

In addition to academic performance, Black students who attend HBCUs in comparison to those who attend PWIs experience cultural affinity, exhibit positive cultural awareness and increased confidence, and are more integrated into the academic life of the campus (Davis, 1994; Palmer & Wood, 2012). Students at HBCUs attest that their academic performance is due to their

ability to focus more on their academic pursuits, unlike the environmental distractions experienced by their Black counterparts who attend PWIs (Bonner & Bailey, 2006). In contrast to Black males enrolled at HBCUs, those who attend PWIs often view the campus climate as hostile due to both implicit and explicit experiences of racism, racial microaggressions and negative stereotypes (Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Robertson & Mason, 2008; Smith et al., 2007; Swim et al., 2003; Vianden et al., 2012).

Campus Climate. Campus climate refers to the current perceptions, attitudes and expectations that define the institution and its members (Peterson & Spencer, 1990), while the campus racial climate is composed of students' observations of their experiences with racism and their perceptions of the university's behavior toward and support of diversity (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). Understanding how campus climate influences the experiences of Black males who attend PWIs is imperative to better understanding the potential psychosocial needs required in the mentorship dyad. Racial groups experience campus climate in different ways (Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999). Black males' perceptions of the campus racial climate is often shaped by the totality of their negative.

While exploring ways by which to improve campus climate for racial and ethnic groups in higher education, Hurtado et al. (1999) declared that institutions of higher education cannot speak about diversity in student enrollment without also acknowledging the psychological climate or opportunities for interaction across diverse groups on campus, in addition to educational outcomes. Hurtado et al. (1999) model describes the elements that influence the campus climate concerning racial/ethnic diversity. The model proposes that campus climate is influenced by four elements: (1) the campus' historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion (i.e., desegregation, mission and policies); (2) structural diversity (i.e., diverse student enrollments

and diverse faculty and staff); (3) psychological climate (i.e., perceptions of racial/ethnic tension, perceptions of discrimination, and attitudes toward and a reduction in prejudice); and (4) behavioral dimension (i.e., social interactions across races/ethnicities, campus diversity, and classroom diversity). These four influential elements are shaped by the contexts of internal and external government/policies and its socio-historical past (Hurtado et al., 1999). The authors argued that previous work addressing campus climate diversity most often focused on diversity enrollment numbers, while paying little attention to campus climate; likewise, a great deal of research on various racial/ethnic groups has focused on academic outcomes without linking the students' educational attainments to the institutional climate of diversity. Concerning exploring mentorships of undergraduate Black males at PWIs, it is important to understand how the institutions' internal and external characteristics influence perceptions of the campus climate by African American males, which inherently influences both the mentor and mentee due to their proximity to the institution.

Students form their perceptions of the institution during their transition into the institution. Locks, Hurtado, Bowman and Oseguera (2008) stated that "like all students, students of color experience challenges in making the successful transition to college; however, they have the added burden of adjusting to college in what they may perceive as a hostile racial climate" (p. 259). Although White students demonstrate the ability to recognize racial harassment, Students of color perceive PWIs to be racist and less accepting (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). D'Augelli and Hershberger (1993) also found that Black students at PWIs expressed significantly more overall negative perceptions of their institution and reported a lower well-being than White students on their campuses.

As such, it is important to understand the institution's perception of how mentorships involving undergraduate Black males influence their experiences and perceptions of campus climate. It is equally important to understand how both participants perceive the mentorship in relation to campus climate. Likewise, Davis' (1994) examination of non-cognitive variables believed to impact educational outcomes showed that Black males' perceptions of institutional support, social support and levels of discrimination influenced their educational outcomes. Academic and racial experiences are the best predictors of Black perceptions of campus climate (Locks et al., 2008; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003), which further indicates a direct linkage between attitudinal perceptions of racial climate and academic performance. Consequently, the campus racial climate is directly linked to the negative stereotypes and racial microaggression experienced by undergraduate Black males at PWIs (Aronson et al., 2002; Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Robertson & Mason, 2008; Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000; Swim et al., 2003; Vianden et al., 2012). These factors potentially affect the support needed by them in a mentorship relationship.

Stereotypes and Microaggressions. Black males in higher education are often falsely depicted as violent and intellectually inferior (Aronson et al., 2002). These negative images of Black males permeate throughout American society (Aronson et al., 2002; Steele & Aronson, 1995). As a result, these negative images influence the perceptions of society (Baldwin et al., 2009; Harper, 2009). Consequently, Black males' cultural identities lead those who believe these stereotypes to judge them unfairly. In fact, "Black students' body language, dress, or speech, that is their unique agency, can trigger stereotypical perceptions about Black males, which may influence how others react to them" (Baldwin et al, 2009, p. 188). It turn, some become victims to unfair judgments, treatment, hyper-surveillance and racism. Giles and Hughes (2009) argued,

“In most instances, racism is subtle and comes equipped with socially acceptable deniability” (p. 690). Racism can possibly influence the dynamics of mentorship involving undergraduate Black males. Likewise, Black males involved in mentorships may encounter racist experiences on campus or within the campus community.

For Black males, the concept of acceptable deniability of racism is the result of perpetuated negative attitudes and false images of Black males as dangerous, violent and uneducated. This attitude provides the excuse that false depictions of Black males warrant such treatment and behavior. Smith et al.'s (2007) study indicated that PWIs perpetuate anti-Black attitudes of stereotyping and marginality, which causes hyper-surveillance behavior and control methods by the local police on campus and within the campus community. The participants in the study reported being defined as “out of place” and “fitting the description” of illegitimate nonmembers of the campus community by local authorities (Smith et al., 2007). The impact of these experiences resembled psychological stress indicative of racial battle fatigue (e.g., frustration, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness and fear). In this context, the hostility within the environment contributed to severe psychological stress and damage to the Black males. The stress caused by these negative stereotypes threatened their abilities to function to their full intellectual and cognitive abilities in the classroom, which is a phenomenon known as stereotype threat (Smith et al., 2007; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Steele (2003) explained that stereotype threat is the “threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype” (p. 253). Steele and Aronson (1995) examined stereotype threat and its relationship to the test performances of Black students. The results indicated that the influence of stereotype threat could be reduced by strengthening Black students’ trust that they are not at risk

of being judged on the basis of negative stereotypes (Steele, 1999, 2003). Additionally, when Black students are encouraged to view intelligence as malleable, they tend to report greater enjoyment of the academic process, higher grade point averages and increased academic engagement (Aronson et al., 2002).

However, in addition to overt experiences of racial stereotyping, Black males are subject to experience racial microaggressions (Allen, 2010; Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000; Swim et al., 2003; Sue & Holder, 2008). Microaggressions are subtle or unsubtle insults, which can be verbal, nonverbal and/or visual, directed toward Black Americans or other people of color both consciously and unconsciously (Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue & Holder, 2008). Pierce (1970) originally coined the term microaggessions to describe insults and dismissals that White society inflicted on Black Americans.

Similar to the impact of negative stereotypes, racial microaggressions can cause Black males to perceive their environments as intensely stressful, exhausting and debilitating to their sense of control, comfort and meaning, while provoking feelings of loss, ambiguity, strain, frustration and injustice (Smith et al., 2007; Sue & Holder, 2008). As a consequence of these dilemmas and stressors, some Black males experience psychological pressures (Bridges, 2011) and feel isolated and rejected by the environment that is not conducive to their identity (Baldwin et al., 2009). Along with factors such as stereotypes and racial microaggressions, identity is also an essential element when exploring the role of mentorships involving undergraduate Black males at PWIs.

Identity. In exploring the mentorships of undergraduate Black college male mentees and their professional mentors at PWIs, the exploration of identity within this environmental context is imperative. Among the many challenges experienced by undergraduate Black men, entering

young adulthood is the continued development of their identity as a Black male in the context of hostile PWI environments (Dahlvig, 2010; Howard-Hamilton, 1997; Howard & Reynolds, 2013). "The concept of racial identity can be used to enhance one's understanding of other identity issues" (Baldwin et al., 2009, p. 193). Along the same lines, Howard-Hamilton (1995) argued that identity enrichment is central to the academic achievement for Black men.

Black Racial Identity. Cross (1971) introduced a Black racial identity theory called the 'nigresence theory,' which means the process of becoming Black. This theory provided a description of Black racial identity development for Black s in the United States. The original five stage development scale was later revised to four stages (i.e., pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion and internalization) (Cross, 1978; Vandiver & Cross, 2001; Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002). The first stage describes the individual as a "type of Black person who experiences profound negative feelings and deep-structure self-loathing because of the fact she or he is Black" (Cross & Vandiver, 2001, p. 376). As the individual emerges from the first stage and progresses through the remaining stages, he or she goes through periods of moving from being anti-White to extreme pro-Black with a strong sense of Afrocentric belief. In the final stage, the individual emerges as a "type of Black person whose identity fuses or reticulates linkages between three or more social categories or frames of reference" (Vandiver & Cross, 2001, p. 376). In applying this theory to the mentorship of undergraduate Black males, it is potentially useful to know how the mentee's racial identity development compares to the theory concerning behavior and racial beliefs. This theory is also important if the mentor is Black, especially in relation to racial preference.

Racial preference was believed to be part of a Black person's personal identity and related to the person's mental health in the original model (Cross, 1971); however, the revised

theory makes a distinction between group and personal identity and does not link these identities to personal self-esteem (Vandiver & Cross, 2001; Vandiver et al., 2002). Additionally, "the revised nigresence theory postulates that personal identity plays a minor role in the definition of Black identity, as Blackness is a reference group variable, or social identity, and not a personal identity" (Vandiver et al, 2002, p. 72). This belief suggests that, although Blackness is a reference group or social identity, one's personal identity in relation to his Black identity may or may not be significant. This concept is important in the context of an individual. Although an individual may or may not choose to place emphasis on race, his group identity can still influence his life experiences. For undergraduate Black males, Cross theory suggests that race has influence regardless of the emphasis they place on race. As a non-monolithic group, although some Black males will regard race as important while others do not, society will not make any distinction.

Additionally, although racial identity is important to a Black male's concept of self, an undergraduate Black male on a college campus has the dual role of being Black and being male. Separately, these roles have alternate levels of oppression and privilege. For Black males, it is important to understand the intersectionality of their racial and gender identities through Black masculinity.

Black Masculinity. Howard and Reynolds (2013) argued, "A limitation with the work on Black males has been a failure to unpack what it means to be Black and male" (p. 233). Crenshaw's (1989) work on Black feminism introduced the concept of intersectionality, which Howard and Reynolds (2013) argued "provides a way to conceptualize how oppressions are socially constructed and affect individuals differently across multiple categories" (p. 234). Intersectionality is a suitable framework within which to examine Black males because it places

race at the core of the analysis (Howard, 2008). The intersectionality theory contends that identity is formed at the place where the categories of identity (e.g., race, gender and class) come together (Brown & Jackson, 2013; Cooper, 2005). Although each person has an intersectionality identity, the consequences are much greater when the individual has multiple subordinate categories (Cooper, 2005; Rice & Brown, 1990). Such individuals who have multiple subordinate categories are maligned individuals who experience more than one major system of oppression, such as women of color. Single subordinate individuals are those maligned by a single system of oppression, such as White women (Cooper, 2005). Although Black males carry the status of being a male, which is a privilege in American society for White males, intersectionality explains how the intersection of race and gender does not allow Black males to own the same privileges in society as White males due to historical oppression and inequities (Cooper, 2005; Harper, 2004).

Critical race-gender theorists avoid male-female polarization; instead, they examine how oppression exists within raced, gendered, classed and sexed relations. In other words, critical race-gender epistemologies emerge from the intersection of racism, sexism, classism and other oppressions that contribute to the experiences of a person of color (Bernal, 2002). Such intersectionality is important in understanding the role that multiple identities play in Black males who, at all times, maintain their race, gender and additional identities throughout their everyday experiences.

Previous research on Black masculinity and its role in identity development for Black males is almost exclusively based on data collected from youth or male adults who were not enrolled in college (Harper, 2004). Men of all ages and ethnicities negotiate their masculinities with other males, which mean that peers often approve and validate manhood (Harper, 2004).

However, these definitions and descriptions of masculinity do not entirely provide a full picture of Black masculinity. In regards to undergraduate Black males, it is imperative to understand how they develop and define Black masculinity.

hooks' (2004) *We real cool: Black men and masculinity* suggested that Black males are victims of racist and sexist attitudes due to a history of oppression, which has led to their criminalization and dehumanization. hooks (2004) argued that cool pose, or acting cool, is a form of Black masculinity that provides a mask that suggests competence, high self-esteem, control and inner strength; but also hides self-doubt, insecurity and inner turmoil. Such behavior is potentially significant concerning the mentorship of undergraduate Black males at PWIs. Specifically, some Black males may display such masking behaviors in attempts to navigate in such hostile environments that do not react positively to their Black masculinity.

Black Masculinity at PWIs. Structures that support and affirm undergraduate Black males who have strong Black male consciousness or who are in the process of developing strong Black male consciousness do not exist at most postsecondary educational institutions (Harper, 2004). The absence of such structures is significant given that Black males' racial identity has a significant impact on their achievements, motivation and attitudes toward school; as a result, when Black males possess or develop healthy racial identities, they are more able to focus on their needs to achieve (Grantham & Ford, 2003). Such claims suggest that efforts designed to improve Black undergraduate academic achievements and social-emotional well-being cannot be successful without specific attention given to racial identity affirmation and development. Understanding the concept of Black masculinity is important in exploring the mentorships of Black males and their mentors.

Scholars argue that if institutions are to be successful in helping Black males navigate within hostile environments, then they must utilize various academic and psychosocial support resources (Howard-Hamilton & Behar-Horenstein, 1995; Howard-Hamilton, 1997). Specifically, Harper (2004) recommended that Black male undergraduates be exposed to Black male faculty, staff, administrators and/or graduate student mentors who can expose them to alternative definitions of what it means to be a man as well deconstruct longstanding negative stereotypes (Harper, 2004).

Some scholars attest that mentorships help the academic and social adjustments of undergraduate Black males at PWIs (Blount, 2011; Brown, 2009; Dahlvig, 2010; Ray et al., 2009). However, given the deficiency of available male Black faculty and other role models throughout the educational pipeline that are potential mentors (Brown, 2009; Freeman, 1999b; Vianden et al., 2012; Zell, 2011), it is imperative to understand the influence of race and gender on the mentorships involving undergraduate Black males.

Undergraduate Mentorship in Higher Education

Jacobi (1991), who conducted an extensive review of the literature on mentoring in education, is one of the most frequently cited researchers regarding college mentoring. The author contends that most of the research and attention on mentoring comes from the fields of education, business and psychology. Jacobi (1991) identified three ways in which researchers in education agree on mentoring: (1) mentoring relationships are focused on growth and accomplishment of an individual through several forms of assistance; (2) mentoring experiences may include broad forms of support including assistance with professional and career development, role modeling and psychosocial support; and (3) mentorships are personal and reciprocal relationships.

Crisp and Cruz (2009) updated the work of Jacobi (1991) and made several conclusive claims regarding the research of mentoring in education. The authors concluded that the literature is largely atheoretical and lacks rigorous research designs—resulting in findings that merely list empirical results, but do not provide compelling theoretical explanations (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). Bozeman and Feeney (2007) stated that

> in the rush to consider such obviously important issues as the nature of effective mentoring, the benefits of mentoring and the impacts of mentoring on women and minority careers, there is all too often impatience with troublesome conceptual and analytical problems (p. 720).

The inability of researchers to definitively distinguish and define mentorship is the most cited conceptual problem in mentoring research (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Mertz, 2004).

Mentorship Defined. Mertz (2004) questioned whether "all relationships referred to in the literature as mentoring [were] talking about the same kind of relationship, or are there fundamental differences in the relationships, differences that can be distinguished" (p. 544). In fact, the author suggests that often researchers mistakenly distinguish and categorize many supportive relationship as mentorships; consequently, the lack of an agreed upon definition complicates their ability to develop a useful theory (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Jacobi, 1991; Mertz, 2004), which causes issues and dilemmas for researchers attempting to study the concept (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). As Mertz (2004) stated,

> the absence of a shared, stipulate definition of mentoring and of boundaries for distinguishing mentoring from other types of supportive relationships makes it difficult to talk with one another, within or across contexts, with any sense of certainty that we are talking about the same things (p. 543).

As such, the term ‘mentoring’ describes a variety of interpersonal relationships within the literature. Crips and Cruz (2009) discovered over 50 definitions for mentoring while doing research. The authors reported that some researchers based their definitions on a specific set of activities, while others defined it based on concepts or processes. The definitions, which mainly came from the fields of psychology, business, and higher education, varied in scope and breadth.

In psychology, researchers describe a mentor as a teacher, sponsor, host or guide, role model, counselor and supporter. In business, mentoring often includes aspects that facilitate career enhancement as well as psychosocial support that promotes a sense of competency and identity (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Crips & Cruz, 2009; Kram, 1983, 1988). Within the context of higher education, the absence of a consistent definition of mentoring is repeatedly cited (Crisp, 2009; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; Nora & Crisp, 2007).

Defined in Education. In higher education, many definitions of mentoring are broad and/or lack consistency (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). However, most mentoring definitions in higher education do include the two functional areas, psychosocial and career support, based on Kram’s (1983, 1985) conceptualization that mentoring should describe an intense relationship in which a senior or more experienced person provides social and career support to a junior person (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). Career support functions include sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection and challenges, while psychosocial support includes role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling and friendship (Kram, 1983, 1985). Although Kram’s (1983, 1988) early conceptualization provided a groundwork for contemporary research on mentoring, the research did not provide an explicit definition for the concept (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007).

While other authors use modified versions of Kram's (1983,1988) original concepts (Eby et al., 2004; Eby, 1997; Ragins & Kram, 2007), Bozeman and Feeney (2007) conclude that mentoring definitions should place boundaries on the concept to reduce the ambiguity of multiple meanings. Bozeman and Feeney (2007) argued that researchers who seek to define mentoring should ensure that the definition is not identical to ordinary language, but not so far removed from reality that it is unrecognizable. Additionally, the authors contended that the definition should be useful in providing boundaries for mentoring and separating mentoring from related varieties of relationships as well as useful for advancing research. Although the literature struggles to define mentoring, researchers frequently attempt to distinguish and define the process through specifying its functions (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991).

Tillman (2001) defined mentoring as an ongoing process within a contextual setting; a relationship between a person of perceived greater knowledge and experience and another person of perceived lesser knowledge and experience; a means for networking, counseling, guiding, instructing, modeling and sponsoring; a developmental mechanism (personal, academic/professional and psychological); a socialization and reciprocal relationship; and an opportunity for identity transformation for both the mentor and mentee. Similarly, Anderson and Shannon (1988) as such:

> Mentoring is a nurturing process, in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter's professional and/or personal development (p. 40).

The authors contended that mentoring functions occur within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé/mentee. Blackwell (1989) defined mentoring

as a process by which a person of superior rank, special achievement and prestige, instructs, counsels, guides and facilitates the intellectual and/or career development of another individual.

Cohen and Galbraith (1995) have one of the most comprehensive definitions in this field of study. This definition is comprised of six dimensions: relationship emphasis, information emphasis, mentor as the facilitator, confrontation function, mentor model, and student vision. The authors speculated that mentors contributed their knowledge, proficiency and experience to assist mentees who are working toward the achievement of their own objectives. They also theorized that the mentoring dyad is a philosophical vision as well as a pragmatic approach to guiding adults through one-to-one learning.

This study utilizes Cropper's (2000) definition. Cropper (2000), who has studied Black students' experiences in mentorships, argued that although there are various definitions of mentoring, the concept is simply the support of one individual by another within a personal relationship developed through regular contact over time. In many qualitative mentoring studies the lack of a definition is as an opportunity for the process to be revealed by the participants, which allows the definition to be reflective of their specific experience in the dyadic relationship (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). This process potentially allows undergraduate Black males' and their mentors' experiences to define their experiences and conceptualize their definition of mentoring. Additionally, a broad definition of mentoring allows for the inclusion of various mentoring models when examining mentorship experiences.

Formal & Informal Mentoring. Mentoring in educational settings is categorized as either formal or informal mentoring (Ragins, 1999). Informal mentoring develops spontaneously, whereas formal mentoring develops with organizational/institutional assistance or intervention, usually in the form of voluntary assignments. Formal mentoring relationships typically begin

through an assignment or matching process initiated by a third party (Ragins, 1999). The mentor and mentee typically have little say regarding the matching (Allen et al., 2005). Formal mentorships are less likely to be based on the factors that enhance interpersonal comfort, such as mutual attraction and identification, and the relationships are usually shorter and have a designated ending (Allen et al, 2005; Ragins, 1999). When comparing formal versus informal mentoring from an academic perspective, the degree of mentoring provided is the same across the two types; however, informal mentoring and its interpersonal comfort is positively associated with career assistance mentoring (Allen et al., 2005). Formal mentor relationships report more career support from mentors when compared to informal mentor relationships (Allen et al., 2005).

In studies with Black student mentees, informal faculty-student mentoring relationships have not yielded a statistically significant influence on the Black students' satisfaction with the mentoring experience (Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). Likewise, research findings have also indicated that Black students—regardless of gender—did not necessarily benefit from their informal faculty-student mentoring relationships (Allen et al., 2005; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2008; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). Despite these findings, students in other research studies have place a high value on informal mentoring do to the psychosocial support that exist within informal mentorships (Wallace et al., 2000). In addition to formal and informal mentoring, additional non-traditional mentoring types exists that are useful when considering the mentorship experiences of Black males at PWIs. The passage below discusses these mentoring types.

Alternative Types of Mentoring. Contemporary researchers describe mentoring beyond the traditional types of mentoring experiences. For example, in education, group mentoring provides some of the same support functions as mentoring dyads; however, a mentor provides

psychosocial and career support to a group of participants in mentoring groups. Such mentoring often consist of one mentor facilitating mentorships with a group of mentees, or groups of people mentoring each other (Darwin & Palmer, 2009). Due to the limited number of available mentors on college campuses, combined with the challenges of finding a dyadic match that fits each participant, many mentees establish mentorships with multiple people (Darwin & Palmer, 2009).

In another example of non-traditional mentoring, Utsey, Howard and Williams (2003) discovered that the use of a therapeutic group mentoring model, derived from a West African social and cultural worldview, with Black adolescent males successfully helped them to counteract self-destructive behaviors and adopt socially adaptive behaviors. This concept of incorporating social and cultural worldviews into mentoring is a compelling concept for exploring mentoring with Students of Color and other underserved student populations, including undergraduate Black males.

Peer mentoring is another mentoring concept that is used within higher education as a means by which to ensure the success and retention of underserved students (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). Many institutions utilize peer-mentoring programs as primary and supplemental mentoring. Peer mentoring has been proven to improve academic performance and decrease student attrition (Terrion & Leonard, 2007).

Although studied within the field of business, Kram and Isabella (1985) explored peer mentoring through the dual mentoring function of career and psychosocial support. The authors discovered that career related functions are limited to information sharing and career strategizing within peer mentoring relationships; however, an absence of sponsorship, coaching, exposure and visibility, protection, and challenges exist within peer mentoring that is present in traditional non-peer mentorship. Additionally, within peer mentorships the psychosocial support includes

confirmation, acceptance, emotional support, personal feedback and friendship (Kram & Isabella, 1985; Terrion & Leonard, 2007).

In addition to traditional dyadic mentoring, peer mentoring and group mentoring, additional types of mentoring exist, including team mentoring, community mentoring and virtual and e-mentoring, which exist both inside outside of education (Gray & Birch, 2007; Knouse, 2001; Parks, 2011; Single & Single, 2005). Although the literature on these alternative mentoring models is exhaustive, these particular studies did not specify how these functions work within mentorships involving African-Americans.

Mentoring Black Males in Higher Education. The purpose of most mentoring programs is to assist students in acclimating to the academic and social culture of the institution (Smith, 2007). Sutton (2006) declared that African American men who attend PWIs desperately need mentoring relationships. Researchers base this declaration on the belief that Black males are likely to encounter many challenges in adjusting to the educational system and hostile environments at PWIs. The belief and desire of many postsecondary institutions is that mentoring for Black males will diminish or counteract these challenges (Grant-Thompson & Atkinson, 1997; LaVant et al., 1997; Sutton, 2006).

In contrast to PWIs, HBCUs offer a unique environment for Black males. Freeman (1999) described how her participants referred to the entire HBCU campus as their mentor. HBCU environments foster more opportunities for formal and informal mentoring relationships between faculty, professional staff members and students (Freeman, 1999). These support systems do not exist at the same levels at PWIs (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Palmer & Wood, 2012). Faculty at PWIs tend to be primarily white and middle-class (Dahlvig, 2010). The persistence and college satisfaction of Black males who attend PWIs relate to the Black student-

faculty ratio and the amount of non-classroom contact with the faculty that Black males are able to experience (Lee, 1992; Lee, 1999; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009). Consequently, it is important to examine the given body of information involving Black male students' contact and experiences with faculty members. As such, it is useful to understand how these faculty view support for undergraduate Black males.

In regard to undergraduate mentoring of Black males, many of the core functions (i.e., psychosocial and career support) of mentoring are provided by college and university staff, senior or graduate students, peers, friends, religious leaders and/or family (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Since there is a shortage of Black male faculty members at PWIs, undergraduate Black males are likely to seek academic and psychosocial support from others outside their race and/or gender. Likewise, they may also seek mentorship from individuals who are not faculty or staff through informal mentoring (Ragins, 1999). As such, it is important to acknowledge that the mentorship of Black males can include the participation of mentors from a variety of campus roles and backgrounds. As such, the activity that takes place within the mentorship can vary.

***Black Mentorship Functions*.** In describing the mentoring experiences of undergraduate Black males, Sutton (2006) contended that mentoring is either instructional or developmental. The author argued that although instructional mentoring programs can positively shape the behavior of the mentee in the areas of educational and social issues, one-dimensional instructional mentoring not only encourages the mentee to become dependent upon the mentor, but also retards the mentee's learning from a developmental perspective. Developmental mentoring focuses on guidance, nurturing and support of individuals perceived as disenfranchised by gender, skill or ethnicity (Sutton, 2006). It encourages the mentor's role to be fluid, adapting to the diverse stages of the mentee's learning. Likewise, this approach fosters

developmental tasks, such as establishing positive self-esteem, gaining control of emotions, creating positive interpersonal relationships with women, gaining an appreciation for academic success and learning basic interaction skills. Sutton (2006) argued that this developmental mentoring is better suited for African American males due to the context of a college setting. In this regard, an abundance of mentoring research has focused more intently on the academic outcomes of Black males rather than on identifying the underlying aspects of the mentoring experience. As such, the field of higher education needs more understanding of the internal aspects of mentorship dyads.

Mentoring Dyad

This section reviews the literature and research regarding the specific dynamics of the dyadic relationship. Grant-Thompson and Atkinson (1997) stated that "although a great deal has been written recently about the importance of mentoring for Black college students in predominantly White colleges and universities, very little research has examined the variables that might influence mentor effectiveness" (p. 122). A major factor determining the success and effectiveness of a mentorship depends upon the ability of the mentor and mentee to share a common perspective about what should happen within mentorship (Mertz, 2004). In investigating the dyad of undergraduate Black male mentees and their mentors at PWIs, it is important to understand the experiences of both participating dyadic components of the relationship—mentor and mentee.

Dyadic Phases. Barnett (1984) suggested that there are three major events in the development, growth and eventual culmination of the relationship between mentor and mentee. These events are as follows: (1) relinquishing the self; (2) realizing the dreams of the mentee; and (3) redefining boundaries in order to allow the mentee to set, redefine and extend his or her

own boundaries on a cycle throughout life (Barnett, 1984). Barnett (1984) view provides a basic, but limited conception of the mentoring process.

Likewise, Kram (1983, 1988) introduced a conception of mentoring phases that remains one of the most general (e.g., psychology, business, and higher education) comprehensive descriptions on how the mentoring experience is initiated and what changes take place throughout its duration. The mentoring phases are initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. Although Kram's mentoring phases come from business research, higher education researchers typically use a descriptive, conceptual analysis of the mentoring phases introduced by Kram (Jacobi, 1991; Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

In the initiation phase, the mentor and mentee come together and the mentorship is established. Within an informal mentoring experience, either participant may invite the other to engage in the relationship (Kram, 1983; 1985. In the cultivation stage, the maximum range of mentoring functions (career/academic and psychosocial) takes place. As an example, in a mentoring relationship, the mentor will foster frequent opportunities to provide support in the described functional areas throughout a given time period to the student mentee in order to cultivate the relationship. In this particular phase, both individuals benefit due to meaningful experiences, frequent interactions and a deepening of the relationship (Kram, 1983; 1985). During the separation phase, structural and/or psychological changes within one or both individuals alter the established nature of the relationship (Kram, 1983; 1985). This change may be due to the end of a prescribed mentoring relationship in a formal mentoring experience or due to a change of circumstances in either a formal or an informal relationship attributable to a number of possibilities that may include a change of location of either participant, the end of the semester or year, or the mentee graduation. Finally, in the redefinition phase, the relationship

evolves into a new form that is significantly different from its past form, or the relationship ends entirely (Kram, 1983; 1985). Although Kram provides a compelling view of the phases experienced in a mentorship, the author's conceptualization of the exchange of knowledge within the dyad is top down traditional concept; however, there are alternative concepts that exist that are not as traditional.

Dyadic Mentoring Concepts. Some researchers have described mentoring in higher education as an interpersonal relationship that is reciprocal and fosters the exchange of knowledge (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Mertz, 2004). A top-down flow of information characterizes early mentoring research experiences. The traditional mentoring dyad is built around the mentor transmitting knowledge, information or support to the mentee (Jones & Brown, 2011). This particular concept is reflective of the mentoring functions described by the early work of Kram (1983, 1985) and reflected in early mentoring literature in psychology, business and education (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; Mertz, 2004).

Mentoring within this framework is understood as a relationship between an experienced and, likely, older mentor and a less experienced and, likely, younger mentee (Jones & Brown, 2011). In this context, the dyadic relationship is hierarchical and the mentor yields more personal power and influence. Additionally, within the framework, the mentor guides and facilitates the progression of the relationship, while the mentee is the central benefactor (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1983, 1985). In regards to the mentorship of undergraduate Black males, viewing the mentorship dyad from this perspective emphasizes power from the mentor's perspective. Darwing and Palmer (2009) argued, "When there is a presumption of status, power and caution, as is often the case with traditional mentoring, there is limited potential for

transformational change" (p. 126). This mentorship perspective fails to recognize the mentees' potential contributions to the mentor and fails to recognize the mentees' power.

Reciprocal Dyad. Mentoring was later re-conceptualized as a reciprocal process after researchers took into account the oversimplification of the top-down concept as well as the mutually beneficial process of the relationship (Jones & Brown, 2011; Young & Perrewé, 2000). The reciprocal concept emphasizes a democratic form of collaborative learning between the mentor and mentee in a bi-directional manner. As such, the mentor is no longer the person holding the power; rather, the mentee shares the power and the mentor demonstrates a willingness to concede power for the benefit of the mentee's development of power (Jones & Brown, 2011). Through this perspective, the researcher equally views the undergraduate Black mentee and his mentor as contributors to and benefactors of the relationship. Considering the perspective of both participants equally is imperative to understanding the dyadic relationship.

Young and Perrewe (2000) proposed a concept for examining mentoring relationships that included both the mentor and mentee perspectives. Utilizing social exchange theory and interpersonal theory, their concept focuses on the mutual exchange behaviors exhibited by both participants in the relationship. Mutuality within the dyad refers to the shared exchange of knowledge and experience that benefits both participants in the relationship (Beyene et al., 2002; Fagenson-Eland, Baugh, & Lankau, 2005; Young & Perrewé, 2000). This view of seeing the relationship as mutually beneficial to both participants has become the norm for most researchers. As such, this concept views the relationship as reciprocal, but also values the unique individual perspectives of both participants in the dyad. However, traditional and reciprocal concepts do not address the influence of outside factors, such as the environment and context,

has on the mentorship. The influence of outside factors is essential when examining the mentorship of undergraduate Black males at PWIs.

Complex Adaptive Systems. Jones and Brown (2011) argued that both the traditional and reciprocal concepts are deficient because they fail to acknowledge the dynamic relationship between both participants and the influence of external factors on the dyad. As a result, the researchers introduced the concept of complex adaptive systems (CAS). The authors explained that, although mentoring is often dyadic, it is also systemic. In this sense, the presence of the dyad's features that exist outside of both the mentor and mentee makes the dyad a system. In the context of mentoring on a college campus, these outside features include institutional history, campus environment and institutional structure. The authors suggest that CAS approach to mentoring research draws attention to the structural properties of the dyadic system, which includes the context of the environment.

CAS take into account that the mentorship is never isolated from other external factors (Jones & Brown, 2011). For example, a mentorship on a college campus is not isolated from the impact of such factors that may include campus racial climate, which is influenced by the campus' historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion; structural diversity; psychological climate and additional behavioral dimensions (Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999; Locks et al., 2008). As such, the state of the institution's climate potentially influences a mentorship that involves an undergraduate Black male. Although the CAS' viewpoint places attention on external factors that are not present in the reciprocal model, both concepts acknowledge the mutual exchange of knowledge that takes place within the dyad.

Mutuality. Fagenson-Eland et al. (2005) argued that the mutuality of the mentor-protégé exchange has received very little attention from researchers. Learning and understanding the

exchange of behavior within the mentorship is important because it helps researchers to understand why some dyads become true mentoring relationships and others do not (Young & Perrewé, 2000). Young and Perrewe's concept focused on antecedent factors prior to the formation of the relationship, the exchange of behaviors during the relationship, the levels of expectations of each partner and perceptual and tangible outcomes at the individual, dyadic and organizational/institutional level (Young & Perrewe, 2000). In developing the model, the authors identified relationship variables relevant to the mentoring exchange, including attraction, commitment, general affect for mentoring, power and performance potential of a partner, and past experience.

If mentors and mentees share the same values, attitudes and perceptions of their relationship, then they will feel more satisfied with the dyad and their partner in the mentorship (Fagenson-Eland et al., 2005). Young and Perrewe (2000) stated that the "dyadic success or the extent to which both partners perceive that their expectations of the relationship have been met is suggested as a possible measure of success in a formal or informal mentoring relationship" (p. 202). The mentor and mentee form their expectations of the dyad at the initiation of the relationship. Their concepts take into account prior personal dispositions at the formation of relationship, as well as the exchange of behaviors of both participants throughout the relationship. Prior personal dispositions include prior beliefs and values that influence a person's expectations and intentions (Mertz, 2004; Young & Perrewé, 2000). For Black male mentees and their mentors, these personal characteristics and dispositions are significant factors. These traits can inherently influence the formation of the relationship. For example, a mentor who harbors negative stereotypical dispositions of Black males may disrupt the formation, hamper expectations and negatively influence the exchange of knowledge within the relationship.

Likewise, a lower regard of Black males may negatively influence the mentor's intents and levels of involvement in the relationship.

Intent and Involvement. Intent and involvement are conceptual variables that factor into the success of the dyadic relationship (Mertz, 2004). Both variables seem to be particularly salient for distinguishing among the types of roles and relationships within the dyad (Mertz, 2004). In particular, Mertz (2004) described intent as the perceived purpose of the activity and whether that activity is worthy of being sought or valued; while Mertz (2004) described involvement as the amount of time and effort required to accomplish the desired intent. Concerning mentoring Black males in college, Ragins (1999) recognized intent as a critical factor in relationships of diversity and mentoring. The researcher identified the need to illuminate the degree of congruency in mentor-mentee perceptions of the relationship.

Congruence and Interpersonal Comfort. The congruence within the mentoring dyad involves interpersonal comfort and is essential in creating a positive dyadic relationship. Mentoring relationships vary widely from satisfactory, or better, to dysfunctional and even harmful based on the congruence within the relationship (Eby et al., 2000). Eby et al.'s (2000) study revealed five broad themes that contributed to negative experience within the dyad: (1) match within the dyad, (2) distancing behavior, (3) manipulative behavior, (4) lack of mentor expertise and (5) general dysfunctionality. Their research results found significant correlations between relational complementarity, social exchange perceptions, intentions to leave the relationship, depressed mood, and psychosocial job withdrawal.

In the research reported by Allen et al. (2005), interpersonal comfort mediated the relationship between gender similarity and the mentees reports of psychosocial and career support mentoring; however, interpersonal comfort within the dyad did not mediate relationships

involving mentoring type (i.e., formal versus informal) (Allen et al., 2005). Specifically, mentees involved in formal mentoring experiences reported a similar degree of interpersonal comfort with their mentors as mentees involved in informal mentoring. Likewise, interpersonal comfort and commitment mediated the relationships between surface and deep-level similarities between mentor and mentee (Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2005). This research indicates that variables outside of formal and informal mentor types and psychosocial and career support, impact interpersonal comfort. In sum, the mentor and mentee bring predispositions into the dyad that affects its functions. These variables influence interpersonal comfort within the dyad, which, in turn, influences both members' levels of intent and involvement (Allen et al., 2005; Mertz, 2004; Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2005). In exploring the mentorship involving undergraduate Black males at PWIs, it is imperative to examine the role that personal dispositions, such as beliefs regarding race and gender, has on interpersonal comfort, participant intentions, level of involvement and the overall success of the mentorship.

Race and Gender Matching. Higher Education literature on the effects of race and gender on the mentoring relationship is inconsistent in regards to variables influence within the mentorship (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Campbell & Campbell, 2007; Ishiyama, 2007; Moore & Toliver, 2008; Lee, 1999; Ragins, 1999; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2008). Cohen and Galbraith (1995) argued that interpersonal comfort variables often prevent the spontaneous pairing of mentors and mentees that takes place in informal mentoring experiences. As such, mentorship dyads do not spontaneously begin unless there is comfort between both participants. Consequently, Black students succeed when matched with persons with whom they can communicate freely and with whom they have similar interests (Freeman, 1999). Although racial and gender familiarity is assumed to yield satisfactory outcomes, an indication exists that this

statement is sometimes, but not always true (Campbell & Campbell, 1997, 2007; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2008).

Race/Ethnic Matching. Despite inconsistences that exist in the field of education, Sabnani et al. (1991) argued that the field of counseling has long acknowledged the importance of racial-identity development to the cross-cultural counseling process. Helms (1985) argued that researchers need a model for predicting the interaction between the various potential racial pairings of counselors and clients. Such a model should take into account the cultural predispositions that each participant brings to the interaction. In this regard, Ishiyama (2007) contended that the literature has suggested that Black mentors and Black students' relationships are qualitatively different from mixed race mentorships due to perceived shared experiences between both members.

Campbell and Campbell (1997; 2007) conducted a quantitative longitudinal study of 339 undergraduate students in a college mentoring program. The results did not show a significant correlation between racial matching, mentoring outcomes and the satisfaction of Black students. Lee's (1999) qualitative research revealed similar findings. However, in a follow-up study, Campbell and Campbell (2007) did find a statistically significant change in the long-term outcomes and mentees' satisfaction of the mentorship based on the mentor's racial identity. Campbell and Campbell (2007) reported that no apparent advantages existed in regard to matching students with mentors based on gender, but students matched with mentors of the same ethnicity showed a higher GPA and graduation rate, and also entered graduate study at a higher rate.

Racial Identity Impact. Grant-Thompson and Atkinson's (1997) research is imperative in understanding the perceptions that Black males have toward same and different race mentors in

relation to racial identity. The researchers' results indicated that the mentor's ethnicity, mentor's cultural sensitivity and student's level of cultural mistrust all play a role in how Black male students perceive a faculty member. Moreover, the researchers' results indicated that Black men with a low level of cultural mistrust regarded the credibility of White faculty mentors about the same as they did the credibility of Black faculty mentors. The students' perceptions of the mentors' level of cultural responsiveness constructed these findings. Grant-Thompson and Atkinson (1997) stated that "there is some evidence that Black students will perceive a counselor who is culturally responsive to be more culturally competent than one who is culturally unresponsive, regardless of ethnicity" (p. 122). In regards to the mentorship of undergraduate Black males, this study suggested that the mentor's ethnicity and level of cultural sensitivity, as perceived by the Black male mentee, positively or negatively influenced the mentee's perception of the mentor. Additionally, the research suggested that undergraduate Black males who do not highly trust other races/cultures unfavorably viewed non-Black mentors. Along those lines, Black males who do highly trust other races/cultures viewed non-Black mentors just as favorably as Black mentors. These varying perceptions influence the initiation and/or success of the mentorship dyad.

Helms (1985) presented an interactional model for investigating cross-race and same-race counseling processes. This particular model is a Black and White model that explores cross-race and same-race counseling from a Black and White perspective. Helms operated from the position that this combination of counselor and client racial identity attitudes influences the types of behaviors they exhibit during counseling sessions as well as their perceptions and experiences of the process. Moreover, the premise that all people, regardless of race, go through a process of

developing racial consciousness, wherein the final stage is an acceptance of race as a positive aspect of themselves and others, formulated Helm's position.

Although Helms (1985) acknowledged the importance of race within the dyad, the author explained that some counselors could work effectively with clients of any race, while other counselors cannot work effectively with clients of their own race. This point speaks to the importance of the racial identity of the counselor, especially in the cases of the counselor or mentor being member the majority group. Sabnani et al. (1991) argued that less attention has been devoted to majority group, or White, counselors' racial identities.

As a result, Sabnani et al. (1991) sought to develop a developmental concept of cross-cultural counseling training needs that incorporated the complexity of interracial relationships as manifested in majority and minority racial-identity models. It is apparent that identity development theory is essential to investigating the mentorships of undergraduate Black male mentees and their professional mentors at PWIs (Brown, 2009; Grant-Thompson & Atkinson, 1997; LaVant et al., 1997). Previous findings indicate that the racial identity development of Black students, in particular the Black males, affect their level of trust and perception of non-Black mentors. In viewing this mentorship through the lens of Black masculinity, this study explores both race and gender.

Gender Matching**.** Campbell and Campbell's (1997) results indicated that academic achievement and retention were unrelated to the gender of the mentor or mentee. Moreover, Campbell and Campbell (2007) cited additional studies (Hollingsworth & Fassinger, 2002; Noe, 1988) that showed no positive correlation between matched gender and performance of any race/ethnic group. However, other studies have indicated otherwise (Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007).

Allen et al. (2005) cited Kodberg, Boss and Goodman (1998) who found that found mentees involved in same-gender relationships reported that they received greater psychosocial mentoring than protégés in cross-sex relationships. Although Campbell and Campbell's (1997) research did not indicate a significant impact of gender matching, the researchers did site Fries-Britt et al. (1994), whose research indicated that students seem to respond more positively to female mentors. Additionally, the results indicated that Black students who had Black mentors reported more positive attitudes than did Black mentees who worked with White mentors. In looking to the literature for further validation, Ragins (1999) argued that it is reasonable to expect that race and gender interact in a synergistic fashion in mentoring relationships. This interaction is imperative when examining the experiences of Black males at PWIs.

Black Males within the Mentorship. Researchers have not looked specifically at the mentoring of Black males at PWIs when formulating mentoring models and phases; therefore, such research does not properly explain the interpersonal levels of comfort of Black males in relation to their perceptions of a positive mentoring experience (Blake-Beard, Murrell, & Thomas, 2006; Campbell & Campbell, 1997, 2007; Crisp, 2009). According to Freeman (1999), when Black students were asked to define a good mentor "their responses fell into very similar categories: 'provides trust and encouragement,' 'causes you to think bigger,' 'is like a second mom or dad' and 'the whole campus is like a mentor'" (p. 22). The Black students explained that a good mentor is someone who provides trust, gives his/her time and devote his/her time to understanding the student's needs. Moreover, a good mentor is someone who challenges and exposes his mentee to possibilities that he might not have considered.

In Freeman's (1999) research, many students discussed the importance of being able to discuss any topic and ask any question to their mentors. Likewise, they described a good mentor

as a person on whom they can call at any time, and one who has the opportunity to spend personal and social time with them. In relation to psychosocial support, the Black students within the Freeman (1999) study more frequently described their desired needs of emotional support from mentorships. This study shows that Black students more frequently expect psychosocial support within mentorships. The expectation of psychosocial support verifies the idea that Black students are more likely to view the mentor's role as providing personal support in comparison to White students (Ishiyama, 2007). In regard to the mutual exchange of knowledge within the relationship, social capital is cited as an exchange in mentoring experiences (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Smith, 2007). For the Black male mentees and their mentors, the benefits and outcomes of participating in a mentoring program are explained through examining the idea of social capital (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Smith, 2007).

Social Capital. Bourdieu and Passeron's early (1977) theoretical work on how hierarchical society reproduces itself is often interpreted as a way to explain why the academic and social outcomes of Black students are lower than the outcomes of Whites (Yosso, 2005). This work included early theories on social and culture capital. Bourdieu's social capital refers to the ways in which some individuals are privileged because of their membership in a social network (Palmer & Gasman, 2008), while cultural capital refers to an accumulation of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities possessed and inherited by privileged groups in society (Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu argued that social capital is as a mechanism of control that the ruling classes use to maintain their dominant position over the general population (Palmer & Gasman, 2008). Likewise, Lin (2000) argued that historical and structural processes foster unequal opportunities among racial, class and gendered groups (Farmer-Hinton, 2006). Like other forms of capital,

social capital is productive and makes the achievement of certain ends possible, which would not be possible otherwise (Coleman, 1988).

Smith (2007) argued that one has to demonstrate that the mentoring process actually generates social capital before affectively claiming that the exchange of social capital through the mentorship experience helps Students of Color succeed. The author examined how Students of Color and first-generation college students access social capital through mentoring relationships. The scholar’s findings asserted that mentors and mentees enter into mentoring relationships because they believed that they could either provide or receive important academic knowledge and resources during the process. This finding indicates that the exchange of academic knowledge and resources, or social capital, is an intentional outcome of many mentoring relationships involving Students of Color. In relation to mentoring, Coleman (1990) argued that individuals could access one another’s human capital through social capital. As such, the inherent social networks that are associated with a mentor, one’s social capital, are transferable to the mentee.

However, according to Farmer-Hinton (2006), previous literature describes the disparities of social capital among Black males as counterfeit social capital. That is, the prior knowledge and social networks that these students bring to PWIs is not usable. However, Yosso (2005) argued that such scholarship is a misinterpretation of Bourdieu’s work, which sought to provide a structural critique of social and cultural reproduction. Yosso (2005) asserted, “This interpretation of Bourdieu’s work exposes the White, middle-class culture as the standard and, therefore, all other forms and expressions of culture are judged in comparison to this norm” (p. 76).

Instead of looking at cultural and social capital from a traditional lens, Yosso (2005) introduced the concept of community cultural wealth, which is an array of knowledge, skills and contacts possessed and used by communities of color to survive and resist macro and microforms of oppression. Additionally, Yosso's community cultural wealth includes six forms of capital that traditional cultural theory often does not acknowledge or recognize: (1) aspirational capital, which refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future; (2) linguistic capital, which is the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style; (3) familial capital, which is a form of cultural wealth that engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a more broad understanding of kinship; (4) social capital, which is a network of peers and other social contacts that can provide both instrumental and emotional support to be used to navigate through society's institutions; (5) navigational capital, which refers to the skills used when maneuvering through social institutions not created with communities of color in mind; and (6) resistant capital, which refers to knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality.

Mentor programs are created with the purpose of assisting students in acclimating to the academic and social culture of the institution (Smith, 2007). For Black males at PWIs, mentoring is a possible method of providing these students with cultural affirmation and the ability to develop or adapt affective skills to maneuver in such environments that can be hostile and isolating. As a result, mentoring is often an intentional means of increasing Black males' social capital at PWIs (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Smith, 2007). However, through the lens of Yosso's community cultural wealth, any coping skills developed through mentoring for Black males who attend PWIs should not involve adapting to the dominant and oppressive ideologies of the

cultural capital; rather developed coping skills should include tapping into often unacknowledged and unrecognized community cultural wealth that many Black males at PWIs already hold before entering college. This way of thinking acknowledges and values the cultural wealth of African American males instead of viewing their cultural capital from a deficit perspective. Literature that examines cultural capital in mentorships typically views the mentee as the benefactor; however, from a reciprocal and mutual exchange perspective both participants are beneficiaries in the mentorship.

Mertz (2004) contended that when looking at mentorships from the perspective of the mentor, it would seem that not all potential mentors would want the burden or be willing to mentor. Although social capital describes its influence on intent and level of involvement from the mentee's perspective, it does not entirely describe it from the mentor's perspective. Additionally, social capital and community cultural wealth are often overlooked, ignored or relegated to deficit thinking by some stakeholders in educational settings (Giles & Hughes, 2009).

Generativity. Mertz (2004) argued that generativity is a possible idea that describes mentors' motivation and commitment to the experience. Barnett (1984) viewed mentoring as a phase of Erikson's stage of generativity (1963), which is associated with the idea of establishing and guiding the next generation through generating creatively and productively. In relation to motivation and commitment to mentoring Black males at PWIs, Reddick (2006) conducted research on Black professors who mentored Black students at PWIs. The results indicated that Black professors were committed to mentoring students for a greater purpose as they saw the mentoring process as a key step in the production of Black college graduates. These professors embraced the responsibility of preparing their student mentees as a service to the Black

community. Moreover, many of the faculty described their experiences as a personal responsibility given their positive experiences at their undergraduate HBCUs. Reddick (2006) provided as unique perspective on the perceived benefits and rewards that some Black professors expressed regarding mentoring Black students.

The literature also reveals that Black faculty and other underrepresented and marginalized groups in higher education often carry a greater responsibility and burden of mentoring students of color, which Padilla (1994) first described as cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994; Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011). The term cultural taxation describes the additional responsibilities placed non-White faculty because of their racial or ethnic identity (Joseph & Hirshfield, 2011). Such activities include serving on diversity committees, serving as department experts, as well as advising and mentoring large numbers of non-White students because of the scarce number of non-White faculty at PWIs. In terms of mentoring Black men on PWI campuses, a review of this topic revealed the need to further investigate and understand how cultural taxation influences the mentoring experience within mentorships involving undergraduate Black males who attend PWIs.

Summary of the Literature

Researchers believe that mentorships assist the academic and social experiences of undergraduate Black males at PWIs. In this regard, the literature reveals implications that are important in the study of mentorships involving undergraduate Black male mentees and their mentors at PWIs. The first implication involves the internal and external variables that influence the experiences of undergraduate Black males who attend PWIs. Specifically, this implication involves the undercurrents of the dyadic relationship related to how the environment, personality, predispositions and the personal characteristics of both participants influence the mentorship in

relation to each participant’s motivation and level of involvement. In this regard, the literature reveals that many undergraduate Black males experience racism, negative stereotyping and racial microaggressions at PWIs; however, a lack of knowledge exists in regards to whether and/or how these factors influence the mentorships. Additionally, the literature reveals the need to understand how the presence of race and racism influences these mentorships from both the mentee and mentor perspectives. Likewise, the literature provides a strong case for further examining how the mentees’ racial identity development, Black masculinity and experiences of racism in the context of a PWI influence the mentorship. In this regard, full understanding does not exist of how undergraduate Black males and their mentors describe these issues.

The second implication involves the functions and activity within the mentorship. As the literature describes, researchers have struggled to accurately define mentoring and its functions (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1999; Mertz, 2004). Likewise, researchers know very little regarding how undergraduate Black males and their mentors specifically describe mentoring, and whether they share the same definition. Additionally, although most mentoring experiences, whether formal or informal, are described as interpersonal relationships that foster career/academic and psychosocial support (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1999), a lack of knowledge exists as to whether undergraduate Black males and their mentors perform these functions within the dyadic experience. Furthermore, researchers know very little about the practiced model and exchange of knowledge that takes place within mentorships involving undergraduate Black male mentees. Researchers describe mentoring relationships as either traditional (i.e., a top-down flow of information from mentor to mentee), reciprocal (i.e., information and responsibility is shared between the mentor and mentee) or CAS (i.e., a system approach that includes structural properties of a dyadic system and includes the context of the

environment). Likewise, given the importance of the power dynamics that exists within mentoring, a lack of knowledge exists in regards to how undergraduate Black males and their mentors describe the exchange of knowledge within the relationship.

For these reasons, the proposed study investigated the mentorships of undergraduate Black male mentees and their mentors at PWIs. The research explored in this chapter informed the purpose of this study and guided the research questions selected to examine this topic. The next chapter, chapter three, describes the methodology used to explore the dyad of undergraduate Black male mentees and their African American male mentors at PWIs.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Situated within the field of higher education, this study critically explored the mentorship mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentor at PWIs. This qualitative study used a critical race theoretical (CRT) perspective and counter narrative methodology. Within this chapter, I will describe the methodological processes used to conduct this study. First, I will frame the study by providing my position of the study as the researcher, which sets the context for my worldview. As such, I outline the study's paradigm and philosophical perspective, providing the framework for the study's epistemology. Then, I will present the specifics of the study's research methods, which include descriptions of the participants, campus, data collection, overview of participants, and data analysis process. Finally, I will discuss the trustworthiness of the study.

Researcher's Position

Qualitative inquiry acknowledges that the researcher is the research instrument (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Critical research acknowledges biases, assumptions and the researcher's position, not as a limitation of subjectivity, rather as central concept of the researcher's worldview (Carspecken, 1996). As the researcher for this study, I acknowledge my identity as a Black male with inherent beliefs that are a result of my life experiences at PWIs as both an undergraduate Black male mentee and the mentor of undergraduate Black males.

My early life experience include growing up as the youngest of five children in an urban city located in the Midwest that experienced the negative impact of urban decline due to the area's diminishing industrial economy. Growing up in the environment has allowed me to have first-hand experience of the difficulties that many urban Black males experience during their

youth as the result of economic, social and educational racial inequalities. My opportunity to pursue a higher education degree was an esteemed accomplishment, especially when considering the number of my peers who dropped out of school or experienced incarceration before high school graduation.

I matriculated into college at my state's public flagship campus, which is a PWI located in a small college town in the Midwest. I was unfamiliar with the town's demographics, culture and overall pace of life and, as such, it seemed foreign based on my prior experience. More importantly, I was not sure how the locals would receive a young Black male from the city. At the time, I was very familiar with society's negative perceptions of Black males, but I pondered whether I would encounter those stereotypes during my college experience.

During my first year, I can recall several occurrences when non-Black residents within the college community mistook me for a student athlete or for not being a student at all. On most occasions, these incidents would occur while in the company of other Black friends. Typically, we laughed and sarcastically agreed that they, meaning the White people in town, must all think that we are athletes attending college on an athletic scholarship because surely we could not be at the institution as students for merely academic purposes. Such experiences made us question whether we were making something out of nothing. However, we assumed that our presence at the institution, as young Black males, did not align with the repeated negative societal images of Black males, unless we were student athletes.

Such incidents demonstrate how an awareness of false stereotypes can make Black males cognizant of situations in which they can be victims, but can also make them aware that such stereotypes cause conflict and constant questioning within the psychological consciousness. In most cases, I did not know whether people meant any harm, as I did not know their worldviews

on race and racism; however, I was sure that I was stereotyped. Similar incidents occurred throughout the remainder of my college years, but the examples of others taught me how to navigate these situations.

As an undergraduate, I participated in a formal mentoring program designed to serve underrepresented students. The mentoring program paired me with a mentor who was a Black male and a campus administrator. At the time, I did not know much about mentorships, so I did not know what to expect or what my mentor expected from the mentorship. However, I took comfort from the fact that he was a Black male who appeared genuine and committed to assisting in my adjustment to college. He taught me a great deal about the surrounding community and provided information regarding local Black barbers, churches and stores. More importantly, he taught me how to handle questions and comments made by local White people that I may perceive as ignorant and racially insensitive. He mentioned that every incident of ignorance is an opportunity to educate. The support he provided helped make the university and the surrounding community less threatening.

More importantly he provided a great example of Black manhood. I still remember the passion that he had for the students, but more importantly, his devotion to his family that was exemplified on campus, in the workplace, at church, and in the community. The love he showed his wife and his son was role modeling at its best. He provided a walking example of the counter-narrative of the negative, false stereotypes of Black men in America who society portrays as bad husbands and absent fathers who are unable or unwilling to provide for their families.

Feeling appreciative beyond my ability to express through words, I would always so “thank you” or “I owe you” and he would simply say “no problem, just pass it forward.” This is

a phrase that I tell students every day as they say "thank you, thank you." I simply reply, "pass it forward man—just like help was passed down to me."

As my collegiate experience continued, I eventually established relationships with additional people who contributed to my success. During my second year in college, I met two doctoral students. They were instrumental role models for many Black males on the campus. Specifically, they were instrumental in helping younger Black males on campus learn how to consider and question contemporary social issues related to equity and educational equality. Their guidance and role modeling expanded my horizons regarding my academic and professional pursuits.

My frequent interactions with them increased my confidence and exposed me to newfound academic and professional possibilities. Their sense of care seemed genuine and I appreciated their presence and willingness to invest their time in others like myself. Although I was not associated with either through a formal mentorship, my association with them was significant. I viewed them both as mentors due to the support that they provided through their investment in time, empathy and guidance. As a result, I used my experiences with both Harper and Wooden as mentoring models for the Black males I later encountered.

My professional experience includes working as an academic advisor for a TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program, a coordinator for the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB) program and the director of a developmental support and success program for Students of Color at an urban PWI. These experiences have afforded me opportunities to work closely with and mentor many Black males in the collegiate setting. These relationships have also varied in relation to duration, depth and function. My aim was to support their academic and social

development through a wide range of practices. As such, it was my personal and professional commitment to assist them in navigating the seemingly hostile institutional climate.

While providing the students with academic and personal support, it is apparent that I also benefit from these relationships. Providing support to younger Black males is a way to pay back those individuals who have given me support. Moreover, the experience of helping the next generation of Black males provides me with a greater professional and life purpose, as well as an overall feeling of pride and enjoyment. In this sense, the dyadic mentoring experiences with my students is reciprocal. We both benefit and learn from one another within the mentorship.

My life experiences have shaped my perspective and worldview. In addition, my lived experiences inform my research position. I am a Black male who has experienced my undergraduate career at a PWI and who now works with undergraduate Black males at a PWI. These experiences, along with the literature involving undergraduate Black males and college mentorships, inform my position that undergraduate Black males at PWIs benefit personally and academically from positive support relationships. As such, the literature informs my philosophical decision to capture the experiences of undergraduate Black male mentees and their mentors by allowing them to express their mentorship experiences using critical qualitative methods.

Philosophical Concepts

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology. Jones, Torres and Arminio (2013) attested that the term paradigm, or worldview, refers to as a set of interconnected or related assumptions or beliefs. Denzin (1996) explained that qualitative research has a multi-method focus with an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. According to Denzin, “this means qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or

interpret these things in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (1996, p. 129). Similarly, Merriam (2009) stated that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5.). Simply, researchers call upon qualitative design research when the study seeks to answer questions regarding participants' understanding and meaning of their experiences. Within this study, the subject matter involves dyadic relationships involving two persons in which at least one—the undergraduate Black male—belongs to a historically marginalized and oppressed group of people. For this reason, this study seeks to go beyond uncovering the interpretation of the participant's understanding and meaning of his world to emancipate and empower change.

Critical Race Theory (CRT). Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars argue that attention should be given to the significance of race and the racial discrimination of people of color when considering how to restructure the social world (Brown & Jackson, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009). As a result, scholars who appropriately place significance on race and racism in U.S. society utilize critical race theory (CRT) (Brown & Jackson, 2013; Giles & Hughes, 2009; Hughes, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Through the works of Derrick Bell, Kimberle Crenshaw and others, Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in legal studies as a challenge to positivist and liberal ideologies, such as colorblindness and meritocracy, to show how these ideas operate to disadvantage people of color (Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Today, it is influenced by the literature in multiple disciplines, including law, education, social science and ethnic and women's studies (Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Within legal studies, CRT's goal is to critique the slow pace and unrealized promises found within the civil rights legislation and, thus, challenge ongoing racism in the legal system

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Jones et al., 2013). Within research, a critical race perspective involves the recognition that racism is normal and common. Additionally, race and racism contribute to shaping society and are deeply embedded within social, cultural and political structures, thus making it difficult to recognize and address (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Patton et al., 2007).

There are a number of tenets that represent the foundational ideas behind CRT: (1) racism is normal and not unusual in U.S. society; (2) the interest of Blacks are accommodated only when there is a convergence with the interest of those individuals in power—interest-convergence or material determinism; (3) whiteness is property; (4) the use of narrative allows for the experiences of those individuals who were previously marginalized to be legitimized in order to challenge dominant ideology (5) a critique of liberalism; and (6) each person has multiple identities, we perform our identities in numerous ways and we can never be certain as to which of these identities others react—intersectionality and anti-essentialism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Yosso (2005) explained that "CRT in education refutes dominant ideology and White privilege, while validating and centering the experiences of people of color" (p. 74). In describing the role of CRT scholars in education, Lynn and Dixson (2013) stated:

> CRT scholars in education seek to show the inextricable relationship between educational inequity and race… CRT scholars in education have also challenged commonsense beliefs about people and communities of color that essentially cite cultural practices and poverty as reasons for educational disparities… CRT scholars have also sought to challenge and expand our understanding of research methods and methodologies such that we can capture, analyze and represent racialized educational inequity (p. 3).

As critical race theory researchers, Giles and Hughes (2009) stated that "we seek to exercise our voices to complement, critique, compare and contrast, and converse on the conditions that shape our experiences" (p. 687). Patton et al. (2007) argued that it is important

for educators and administrators to understand how race reproduces inequities. Likewise, Blacks at PWIs are a historically marginalized group as evidenced by the negative stereotyping and negative images created by society of this demographic (Cuyjet, 2006, 2009; Harper, 2006a, 2009; Harper & Davis, 2012; Harper et al., 2009). Concerning Black males at PWIs, this theoretical perspective and its counter-narrative methodology helps to understand and address the marginalization and disenfranchisement of Black males in this context by challenging preconceptions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). In relation to the mentorships involving Black males and their mentors, this research perspective helps guide the study, as well as challenge and expand our understanding of what issues are important and provide a proper narrative on the experiences of undergraduate Black males who attend PWIs.

Critical Race Methodology. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define critical race methodology as a theoretically grounded approach that: (1) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process; (2) challenges the traditional research paradigms, theories, and scholarship used to explain the experiences of students of color; (3) offers a transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; (4) focuses on the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of students of color; and (5) uses interdisciplinary knowledge to better understand the experiences of students of color. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) state that,

> Critical Race Theory in education "is a framework for set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominate racial positions in and out of the classroom (p. 25).

Furthermore, the authors argue that CRT methodology in education has at least five elements that form the basic insight, perspectives, and methodology, and pedagogy. These five elements include the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, the challenge to

dominant ideology, the commitment to social justice, the centrality of experimental knowledge, and the transdisciplinary perspective.

Methods

Setting. This study took place on two campuses, both being PWIs, belonging to the same university system located in the Midwest. The two campuses included the main campus, which is a traditional residential campus, and a second location, which is an urban campus located in a large metropolitan city. The demographics, includes the faculty, staff/administration and campus community, are significant to the study and inherently contribute to the environment and campus climate. Likewise, these variables inherently influence the experiences of Black males who attend the campus. This study aimed to understand the experiences of mentoring that take place between undergraduate Black males and their African American male mentors in these environments.

Participants. The participants of this study included both the mentors and mentees. The study first sought to identify the mentee participants, then each of the mentees' mentor based on a criteria. The criteria for the mentee in the study included their enrollment as an undergraduate at a PWI, their self-identification as a Black male, and their current or prior participation as a mentee/protégé in a mentoring relationship at the PWI. The mentor participants were required to be faculty/staff member or graduate student who participated as a mentor in a mentorship with one of the identified Black male undergraduate participants.

Additionally, the study used a snowball procedure, which refers to a word-of-mouth technique, to find students who meet the described criteria (Patton, 2002). Specifically, the study solicited campus mentoring programs as well as student support and cultural affinity programs on campus to find undergraduate Black males. I contacted campus programs and initiatives that

specifically served a large number of Black and/or minority students to distribute emails to undergraduate Black males that request their participation in the study. In addition, I reviewed minority student groups, including historically Black fraternities, registered with the campus Student Life office to seek contact information of organizations leaders and participants to locate additional study participants.

After prospective mentored undergraduate Black males responded to the email, I then evaluated each one based on the above criteria. With permission and authorization from each undergraduate Black male that fits the criteria, I then contacted his respective mentor through e-mail to gain his agreement to participate in the study. The data collection commenced once both participants for each mentoring dyad had agreed to participate.

Data Collection. This study used separate one-on-one semi-structured interviews to collect the responses of both the mentees and their mentor in each of the mentorships. After all participants completed their one-on-one interviews, I then brought in both participants within the mentorships for joint interviews that allowed the participants to share their experiences and perceptions with the other participant in their mentorship. All interviews lasted approximately 60 to 75 minutes. I brought back one participant, who was my mentee, in for a second follow-up interview as a means to clarify the gathered information and confirm my initial analysis. I then transcribed the audio recording for each of the interviews. As I implemented a CRT perspective, the interview protocol consisted of narrative focused questions. Additionally, critical inquiry design methods required that the research questions were broad and open-ended in order to allow the participants' experiences to emerge (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, Merriam (2009) stated that "those who engage in critical research frame their questions in terms of power—who has it, how it's negotiated, what structures in society reinforce the current distribution of power, and so

on" (p. 10). As a means to utilize CRT counter-narrative methodology, the study protocol asked each participant a series of questions geared toward telling their narratives about their mentoring experiences from the mentee or mentor perspective.

Data Analysis. This study used a CRT counter-narrative methodology to draw out the participants experiences. The use of counter-narrative methodology legitimizes the experiences of those marginalized. Brown and Jackson (2013) stated that "one way to demonstrate that racial and ethnic phenomena are interpreted differently based on the positionality of your particular group in the social hierarchy is to tell stories, parables, chronicles or narratives" (p. 19). This is done through methods such as storytelling, family histories, narratives and testimonies that challenge claims of racial neutrality and reveal that racism and racial discrimination are neither unusual nor occasional in the lives of people of color (Brown & Jackson, 2013).

CRT counter-narrative methodology challenges what Solórzano and Yosso (2002) describe as monovocals, master narratives, and majoritarian stories, which are stories and narratives generated from a legacy of racial privilege that may appear to seem natural, if not critically exposed. The authors contend that counter-stories serve the following functions: (1) build community among marginalized people by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice, (2) challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems, (3) open new windows into the reality of marginalized people by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrate the they are not alone in their position, and (4) teach others that by combining elements from both the story and current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As a result, the

interview protocol consists of a series of explorative questions that attempt to answer the research questions through narratives stories that gives voice to the participants' experiences.

I then created counter-stories using elements from Straus and Corbin's (1990) theoretical sensitivity and Delgado Bernal's (1998) cultural intuition positioning (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Theoretical sensitivity is the personal quality of the researcher and it refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to comprehend, and ability to separate the pertinent from the non-pertinent (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Straus & Corbin, 1990). Likewise, Delgado Bernal (1998) refers to cultural intuition as the use of one's personal experience that includes collective experience and community memory (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Delgado Bernal (1998) explains that "cultural intuition is a complex process that is experiential, intuitive, historical, personal, collective dynamic" (p. 568). Utilization of theoretical sensitivity and cultural intuition involves using the totality of my background and experience as a Black male who works in higher education as mentor to undergraduate Black males to analyze and interpret the data.

While employing the sum of my knowledge and experience as the researcher and a inside's perspective as a Black male and mentor to one of the mentees in the study, I first used observer comments and notes taken during the interviews to provide real-time interpretations and impressions of perceived meaning that I observed during the interviews. Carspecken (1996) argues that meaning is first understood in holistic and tacit ways during daily life, whereas the process of meaning making is circular and moves from tacit toward the explicit and then back to the holistic. This process involved mentally noting possible underlying meanings throughout the interview, as well as noting recurring patterns and unusual, revealing events or responses from

the participants. As the researcher who as an insider perspective, this process included using my personal experience and knowledge to inform such interpretations as the preliminary analysis.

Next, I transcribed and grouped together all of the participant interview responses and review the interview notes for significant points in the transcriptions. After reading through the transcriptions line by line, I selected multiple segments for explicit, initial meaning construction by adding discursive articulations of tacit modes of meaning (Carspecken, 1996). I then categorize and coded data within the transcriptions related to the experiences and narratives of the participants. This analysis served as an articulation of possible meanings that others could infer either overtly or tacitly. I then categorized and coded the validity claims based on the derived meanings (Carspecken, 1996). From there, I analyzed the coded data to make connections between the coded themes in order to form a comprehensive description and derived meanings within the mentorship from the participants (Carspecken, 1996).

Through using a CRT lens that relates to race and gender experiences of African American males at PWI, I sifted through the codes of data for examples of concepts to be illuminated. I also added my own professional and personal experience related to such concepts and ideas. This includes not only using my own background, but stories and reflections on multiple voices of family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances to inform my analysis and construction of a counter-narrative (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Trustworthiness. This study addresses trustworthiness through three strategies: (1) ensuring accurate reporting of the participants' responses and views, (2) triangulation of the data through utilization of common themes and (3) maintaining consistency in the study's data analysis. First, I enlisted the help of the participants to partake in a member checking activity as a means to address the trustworthiness of the study (Patton, 2002). I then asked the participants

to review their interview transcripts in order to ensure the accuracy of their quotes. Additionally, I asked the participants to provide further comments on their responses and ask whether they agree with the researcher's interpretations of their interview responses.

Second, I established and maintained a journal throughout the study. I used the journal mainly during the data collection process to record entries that included reflections following each interview. I also used the journal during the data analysis as a running commentary on the study's findings. Qualitative researchers utilize journals as tools to help triangulate data across multiple sources during the coding process (Patton, 2002). Specifically, the journal helped during the reflection process of my own personal experiences as both a Black male and a student affairs practitioner who mentors undergraduate Black males. The journal provided a means to negotiate my thoughts and viewpoints while analyzing the data.

Third, I conducted peer debriefing during the data analysis. When necessary, the researcher held informed conversations with research colleagues and members of the research committee in order to question and verify the analysis of the data (Patton, 2002). This process involved the researcher sharing his notes with his peer(s) and having discussions regarding the coded data, decisions made and conclusions about the dyadic relationships (Patton, 2002). The described process was the methodology for this study.

Ethical Research Concerns. Prior to recruiting participants and conducting interviews, I obtained approval to conduct research on participants from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Indiana University Bloomington. Additionally, the responses and identities of all of the participants remained confidential. I gave the participants pseudonyms to protect their identities in all written work. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim into a word processor document. In addition, I secured all digital audio recordings, along with the electronic

transcriptions, research journal entries and additional notes on the researcher's computer. I also secured all hardcopy interview transcriptions, research journal entries and additional notes inside a locked filing cabinet in my private office.

Overview of Participants

This study includes the collective narratives of five undergraduate Black male mentees, along with three of their mentors on two separate public PWIs located in the Midwest. Three of the undergraduate mentees attended the urban campus located in the state's capital. Two of which participated in a mentorship with their own specific mentor, while the third participated in a mentorship with myself. In contrast, the other two undergraduates attended the traditional, residential campus and both shared the same Black male mentor. Although each of the mentors and mentees shared the same race and gender, each brought a set of unique characteristics and personal backgrounds into their mentorships. The following excerpts provides and prospective into their backgrounds, mindsets, and personal beliefs.

Malik (mentee). At the time of the interviews, Malik was a 20-year old junior at Urban University. After attending college for one year at a smaller public institution near his hometown, Malik transferred to Urban University before his sophomore year. Malik grew up in a small industrial city on the outskirts of a major U.S. metropolitan area located in the Midwest. His hometown suffered from an economic downturn. Many residents, such as his brothers and uncles, struggled to find steady, quality jobs. His brothers and uncles did not attend college and was often unable to relate to some of the challenges that he experienced in college; however, they all played a major role in preparing him for adulthood and heavily supported his academic endeavors in college.

Malik is consciously aware and outwardly proud of his Blackness. Maintaining his Black identity within the whiteness of a PWI space and place is very important to him. Malik described the explicit and implied pressures placed upon Black males to change their behavior to fit into the proclaimed multicultural diversity of a PWI. He sees such behavior as a betrayal of his Black identity. As he explains:

> Sometimes it just feel like to build that bridge to, I'll say diversity, you have to change yourself to be in an institution, and I'm not gonna do it. I'm gonna be me so if I don't feel comfortable somewhere I'm not gonna try to change myself...Yes, there is always pressure to change because you might have to talk a certain way, you might have to act a certain way that they see fit.

Malik proudly describes himself as the "Trap Scholar":

> I'm gonna tell you what my friends call me – this is kind of funny they call me a trap scholar. They are like you like trap stuff – like you read books and stuff. And I'm like cause its about who you are. And like I said when you go into that world you're going to have to change, but that's why I try my hardest not to…They call me trap scholar because I like rims, I like old cars, I like all that stuff. I like tattoo's I like all that stuff that they consider "rachet". I got this, this, chest piece, ribs – all that.

Malik proudly recognizes that these two images are in conflict for many people who attempt to stereotype and homogenous Black males in society. Malik proudly shows that he could proudly like items negatively associated with the worst stereotypes of Blacks males, while still defying such stereotypes by also showing sincere interests in literature.

James (mentee). James was a 21-year old heavily involved junior at Urban University who participated in two separate campus support and success programs. He was also an executive board member in a student organization designed to support the social and academic needs of Black males on campus and a member of one of the campus' Historically Black Greek-lettered Organizations (HBGO). James expressed pride related to his activities and associations with the campus programs and the student organizations. James was a Sports Management major

whose career ambition was to become a head football coach at either the college or professional level.

James also enjoyed writing poetry and designing images through his talents with computer graphic technology. As result of his campus activities, many students and faculty/staff at Urban University knew of James talents and frequently requested his graphical design services to create advertisement for campus events and to hear his poetry performed through spoken-word at campus poetry sets. James valued his social experiences at Urban University, but found his academic experience and those of other Black students to be unsatisfying and disengaging. As he states:

> When I'm in class, it's taught toward a certain crowd. Not necessary saying it's geared towards the white or the Caucasian crowd, but it's not very interesting to me because the things that I hear or the voices that I hear I cannot relate with. For instance, in class today I had a teacher that was talking about his experiences with flying all over the country—talking about the corporate world that he works in. And I'm not saying that it's not inspiring, but the way he displays himself it's not very true. A lot of times I'm not in class, I'm there but I'm not there and I'm not really engaged… I think it's roughly the same and I hear stories from my peers, my friends. They feel like they are not very well engaged…I can look over and see that they are not as engaged as they should be. They are listening and taking notes, but sometimes it seems like their mind is in a different place.

James narrative depicts the experiences of a student who does not see his culture or life experiences reflected within his instructor or within the curriculum. Moreover, it demonstrates the inability or unwillingness of White faculty to incorporate materials and pedagogical approaches that are not culturally whitewashed and marginalizing to students of color. James hesitancy to say that his professors design the curriculum for Whites is an example from CRT that suggests racism is normal. Meaning, although James knows that it does not feel right, it is normal for him to feel that the curriculum is for Whites and not him. More importantly, James never questions why more of his instructors are not Black—an example of the normality of institutionalized racism.

Chris (mentee). At the time of the interviews, Chris was 23 years old and had recently graduated from Research University the previous May. His interviews consisted largely on his reflective accounts of his undergraduate experience at Research University during the previous years. Chris was born in a small town located within the same Midwest state as Research University and Urban University. Both of his parents played a major influence in his life. Chris described his parents as blue-collar workers who were both hardworking and dedicated to providing him with the best that they could provide. Growing up, Chris father attempted to prepare him for the harsh realities of racism that he would experience in life by sharing with him attitudes, behaviors and situations of racism that he could expect to encounter. Chris' undergraduate experience at Research University largely consisted of student activism that challenged the status quo practiced by the institution's leadership. Chris felt undervalued, marginalized, and disenchanted with the racial microaggressions that he experienced at Research University. As he states:

> People would always ask me when I first got to campus if I played any sports. People wouldn't take me seriously in classes. I would be one of the last people to get picked for a group. People wouldn't readily come to me or look at me as someone knowledgeable, so I definitely felt marginalized. The first set of classes I took were criminal justice and political science. I would be pretty much be the only Black male in all of my classes. It was really threatening to me.

Chris sought his mentor Lando for help with understanding the institutionalized racism that he began to recognize shortly after his arrival on campus as a freshman. With the support of his mentor, Chris eventually became an important student leader on campus. His actions and motives attempted to make other students conscious of the situation and he ultimately attempted to subvert the campus institutional barriers to racial equity.

Author (mentee). Author was a very confident, soft-spoken 21 year old junior at Research University who was a talented musical performer pursuing a B.A. in Ethnomusicology.

He was born in the South, but his family moved to the Midwest when he was in elementary school. Although he spent most of his time in the Midwest, Author still identified more with what he considers his Southern Black cultural values and customs, which often came into conflict with the customs and behaviors that he witnessed in the Midwest and at Research University. As he describes:

> I never really saw guys knowing that you should open doors for ladies or that you should walk on the outside of the sidewalk and let them walk on the inside to keep them from being hit by mud or water or pushed out in the street or anything like that. It was very, and still is very, uncommon even when I'm telling the young guys now that I do stuff like that. They are just like, ‘wait a minute’. And even especially the more sad thing is the ladies will give you that, ‘wait a minute.’…that's a part of my nature it's not something that I can readily change about myself and be comfortable with.

Author’s affinity for Southern cultural values and customs is part of what made him connect with his mentor Lando, who was also from the South. Author participated in pre-college programs that exposed him to college life and the social and academic experiences at Research University. Author’s experiences and activities at Research University were mainly within the peripheral support of the Ethnomusicology department faculty and the administrators/staff who worked for the Opportunity Program (OP)—a campus support program that recruited and provided support for historically underrepresented and marginalized student populations. Author benefited tremendously from the wraparound support of his department and OP.

Jefferies (mentee). Jefferies was a 23-year old communications major who had recently completed his fifth year at Urban University. He explained that he experienced some “ups and downs” when describing his academic experience at Urban University. He was very close to both

mother and grandmother who both raised him together in the same household. Jefferies explained that this experience gave him an appreciation and greater understanding of Black women. As the only child of a mother who worked long hours to support him, Jefferies learned to think and operate independently.

Jefferies did not give much thought to where he would attend college, but he ultimately chose to attend Urban University because it was only a couple hours away from home, but far enough away to feel like he had went away to college. Additionally, it was important to him that the campus was located within a large, diverse metropolitan city. It was also important that Jefferies' personal doctor for sickle cell anemia practiced at the university's medical center.

Jefferies expressed interest and a will to participate in this study when I first solicited student participants using a number of methods. During his first year at Urban University Jefferies cultivated close relationships with two older students (Black female and male) who he considered his informal peer mentors—both of which had successfully graduated from the institution. When reviewing the study's criteria of undergraduate Black males who have participated in mentorship experiences, Jefferies explained that he considered me to his current mentor, although we had not formally declared such a title with one another. Throughout his undergraduate experience at Urban University, we developed a close relationship through mutual affiliations. Two of his roommates were members in one of the campuses active BGLOs—an organization in which I am also a member and participated as the faculty/advisor to chapter located at Urban University. Jefferies would later join our BGLO and asked me to be his pledge father—a fraternal symbolic term of endearment used by some BGLOs that symbolize a fraternal bond between a neophyte and a prophyte.

Mr. Scott (Mentor). Mr. Scott was an administrator at Urban University for nearly 10 years. One of the academic success programs on campus paired Mr. Scott with James during the previous spring. The success program created a mentoring initiative to link Black and Latino junior and senior student participants with volunteer faculty and staff members who would assist their students with guidance and support regarding graduation and post-bachelor degree planning. Mr. Scott stated that his mission is to mentor Black males. His personal obligation to provide mentorship is rooted in his early adult years where he was in search of Black male role models who would provide examples of manhood; and later while in college when he was in search of Black male role mode with whom he could connect with at his PWI alma mater. As he states:

> Watching the growth of young men—I think it's really important as an older and mature male to be able to deposit back into the lives of young men. It was really formational in my own life not growing up with a father. I look to my neighbors and my coaches to be positive male influences as well as men in the church. I think my next door neighbor Mr. Jamison…he didn't mentor me directly, but I watched him. I watched everything that he did from how he treated his wife to how he treated his daughters. He had all daughters and one son. Eventually when I went into undergrad I sought for that, but I never got it. I went to a predominately white institution in Ohio. So I come out of high school a graduate in the top five of my class and go to a PWI, but I can't connect. And so the few times I reached out for a black male there was no response…They had other commitments and obligations and there wasn't a centralized place to go and say hey I need some damn help!

Mr. Scott's personal commitment and desire to provide himself as a Black male role model is evident within his mentorship of James at Urban University. The age difference between Mr. Scott and James was over 20 years. Mr. Scott believed in a traditional top-down mentorship approach that involved specific, measurable goals and clearly defined personal boundaries between the mentor and mentee.

Lando (Mentor). At the time of the interviews, Lando was a doctoral student at Research University (RU). His previous student and professional involvement in higher education

consisted of experiences mainly at HBCUs. Landon was a Black male mentor for both Author and Chris at Research University. His involvement with one of RU's pre-college summer programs resulted in his informal mentorship of Author, who a high school senior in the pre-college summer program. With Lando's encouragement and support, Author applied and matriculated into RU where his relationship with Lando continued during his undergraduate career at the institution.

Lando was initially Chris' first-year seminar instructor for a course associated with the Affluent Program, which was a support program on campus that provided scholarships and leadership experiences to students from underrepresented populations who had acquired high SAT/ACT scores and/or who ranked high in their high school graduation class. The first-year seminar involved conversations and discussions related to freshman transition into college topic and best practices for college student success. As a student in Lando's class, Chris began to develop an informal mentorship with Lando through conversations about racial issues on campus. As Chris describes, "Lando is the first black male to really teach me and tell me how to navigate through the university structure as a black male, him and I clicked from there." As such, Lando supported and helped Chris develop his views and leadership strategies towards addressing such concerns through student activism. Chris' leadership and activism on campus included the organization of student protests and rallies, but also direct talks with the campus provost that demanded improved direct support of underrepresented students and increased financial support directed towards the success programs on campus (Opportunity and Affluent programs) created to serve the needs of underrepresented students.

Lando deeply contested the racial climate of Research University and emphatically proclaimed that the institution did not care for wealth fare of Black people and was not

supportive environment for Black males. His feelings were the result of the direct institutional racism and microaggressions that he experienced and witnessed while at RU. Such experiences, which were completely opposite of the caring and supportive environments that he experienced at HBCUs, were his reasons to conclude that RU did not truly value Black people. As Lando states:

> First of all, RU don't care about black folks. RU don't give a dog on about Black people. So the first thing RU, or any of the predominately white institutions, are gonna have to do [in order to better serve the needs of Black males] is have a real true valuing of black people.

Lando's feelings that RU did not value or care for Black people was his motivation for mentoring. He expressed that his mentorships with Black males are his means to be a role model, counteract institutional racism, and defy negative, false stereotypes of Black males. Lando's desire to support Black males through mentoring was also rooted in sense of personal responsibility to support students in the manner that his mentors supported him at his HBCU alma mater.

Leon (Mentor). Leon was Malik's mentor at Urban University (UU). Similar to the pairing of James and Author, the same UU campus support program paired Leon to provide mentorship to Malik. Leon was a Black doctoral student at UU who also worked on campus as an editor for an educational journal. Leon's previous involvement in higher education included student and professional experiences at private and public PWIs. Both of Leon's parents are college educated and involved in mentoring. As he described:

> Both my mom and dad are heavily engaged in mentoring... My dad, he just retired but he worked for 30 years in the industry and was always looking out for other people that he could take under his wings and teach some things of the trade. I look at my mom in terms of religious and spiritual mentoring. She's always grabbing young women or even little girls – having mentoring programs for them and working with them. So I think and

> when I ask them about it, that's what they talk about. If you have knowledge, the idea is not to hoard it, but to share it.

Leon mentions how his parents were examples of one’s desire to fulfill each individual’s personal responsibility to share their knowledge. As a source of his motivation to mentor, he also mentions the importance of his personal faith. As he states, “to whom much is given, much is required is straight out of the Bible and that really shapes what I do and how I like to think where I invest my time.” Leon’s desire to share knowledge is evident in his mentorship activities and conversations with Malik.

Chapter Four: Analysis and Themes within the Participant Narratives

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this study is to explore college mentorships that involve Black male mentees and their Black male mentors at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). The eight participants, along with myself, represented five separate mentorships that revealed individual and shared positions regarding Blackness and manhood, beliefs regarding the presences of race and racism in relation to the Black male experience in society, and views on Black male mentorships within the place and space of PWIs. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the collective narratives of the men in this study as a means to understand how such mentorships function at PWIs.

As such, this chapter discusses the participants' narratives and the five themes that emerged from their interviews: 1) how we define mentoring; 2) the campus is not made for us; 3) I been there before; 4) our conceptions of Blackness and manhood; and 5) cultural borderlands. Each theme highlights the experiences and perceptions of these particular Black male mentees and mentors at their respective PWIs. Each of the five larger themes that organize this chapter has accompanying subthemes that further depict the experiences of the participants within this study. These five themes highlight the complexities and nuances that exist within the mentorships and help to understand how mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and mentors function at PWIs.

In addition to the imbedded five themes that emerged within the study, four tenets of critical race theory (CRT) emerged within the five themes that included: 1) racism is ordinary; 2) Whiteness is property; 3) the concept of interest-convergence, and 4) the concept of intersectionality. These four tenets helped to analyze and conceptualize the five themes that

emerged within the participants' narratives in the study. As such, the narratives in this study revealed the lasting presence of the historical, marginalized experiences that Black males have endured in the U.S.; the influence of race and racism in academia; and the role of Black male mentorships on the campuses of PWIs. Although the participants experienced examples of negative stereotyping and racial-microaggressions at their respective PWI, each of the participants expressed a positive regard for their mentorship experience within the context of the PWI. Consequently, the participants reaffirmed their belief in the usefulness of their relationships.

Each mentor and mentee represents a unique lens through which can be viewed the common experiences that take place on college campuses. Their accounts illuminate the diversity that exists among Black men individually, but also the variety of experiences that exists within Black male mentorship experiences. Their unique experiences permeated throughout their narratives.

Captured Themes

The narratives of the Black male mentors and mentees revealed that:

- The participants defined mentoring based on acts of care that included availability, listening, authenticity, and challenge within the mentorship.
- Black men experience campus hostility that gave me them the perception that PWIs are not made for Black men.
- The participants value the exchange of knowledge within the mentorship based on a shared cultural understanding that contributed to idea that I have "been there before."

- Conceptions of Blackness and manhood are prevalent within the purpose, formation, and activities within the mentorships.
- Conversations within the mentorships involve discussions of one's Blackness in relation to navigating within a White culturally dominated society.

How We Define Our Mentoring

As mentioned in chapter two, researchers struggle to distinguish and properly define mentoring, and as such, some researchers mistakenly categorized all supportive relationships as mentorships. Consequently, the lack of an agreed upon definition complicates their ability to study the phenomenon (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Jacobi, 1991; Mertz, 2004). The definition of mentoring in higher education research often lacks consistency (Crisp & Cruz, 2009); however, most definitions include the two functional areas, psychosocial and career support. Kram (1983, 1985) conceptualized that mentoring is an intense relationship in which a senior or more experienced person provides social and career support to a junior person (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). This study defines mentoring simply as the support of one individual by another within a personal relationship developed through regular contact over time (Cropper, 2000); however, when conducting the joint interviews with the mentors and mentees, the participants provided their definitions of mentoring which included intentional acts of care that were essential to their mentorships.

Availability. Specifically, the participants' descriptions of their mentoring experiences included aspects related to the idea of perceived availability as an essential act of care. Within their concept of mentoring, the perceived level of care of the participants in the mentorship was often associated with the amount of time that participants put into the relationship. Likewise, the level of investment through one's given availability was associated with the mentees' perception

of how much the mentor actually cared. For example, the relationship between time investment and care was evident in the mentorship involving Lando and Author. Both participants shared the idea that mentorships involving undergraduate Black male mentees and mentors must include an aspect of availability. As Lando described, “mentoring to me is being available to somebody at any time, in season and out of season.” Meaning, as a mentor to a Black male it is important to him that his support and availability does not have set hours. Author, who was Lando’s mentee, agreed with Lando’s assessment.

> I definitely agree when it comes to [the definition of] a mentor. It is someone who is not set or strict to a certain amount of hours that you’re able to access them. You’re able to access them pretty much anytime like any other normal person. It's not like office hours or anything…Someone who is there for you, kind of what Lando is saying in season and out of season. Not just someone who is there for you and then when they don't have time for you it’s just like, ‘Hey, I'm sorry G, I can't.’ It’s real sometimes, especially in academia. But it’s someone who, even despite the lack of time, [is] still able to make time for you.

Author’s response indicates that both Landon and Author viewed the mentor’s availability as an important aspect of what defines the mentorship. Likewise, the giving of one’s time was indicative of how the mentee prioritized the mentorship. When describing what a mentor is to him, Author stated that a mentor is “not just someone who is there for you and then when they don’t have time for you it just like, ‘Hey I’m sorry G, I can’t.” Author’s response indicates that his ideal mentor is one who makes himself available to him, even when it is not ideal or convenient. Author described how Lando’s open availability helped form and solidify their mentorship. As he describes:

> It became just like that type of relationship where it was like, man I got somebody here that’s real cool. I can talk to him about anything, I can call Lando and say, ‘Hey let's meet up,’ or he'll call me and be like, ‘Hey, Author, I ain't seen you in a minute, what's going on with you? Let's meet up.’ It just became that type of relationship.

Author's statement supports the idea that intentional and deliberate acts of care create meaning within the mentorship for both participants. Specifically, Lando's actions, which included arranging spontaneous meetings to check on his well-being, were actions that affirmed Lando's care, and provided more meaning to their relationship. This idea of care as an essential component of the mentorship questions whether the participants' ability to experience meaning or substance within the mentorship is impaired without the presence of care.

Moreover, a sense of care established in the mentorship also gives merit and validity to the information and advice that the mentor gives to the mentee. As Jefferies explained when talking about the importance of care in mentorships involving undergraduate Black male mentees such as himself:

> You can talk [and] smile all you want and give them all the advice in the world, but what you're saying holds no merit, no value to it if you truly [don't] care, because, in that case, that person might as well just pick up a book.

Jefferies statement about care within the mentorship supports that idea that he believes that a sense of care provides merit and validity to the mentor and the information and advice that he provides. As he states, "what you're saying holds no merit, no value to it if you truly don't care." As a mentee, Jefferies clearly indicates that his perceived assessment of the mentor's level of care and sincerity dictates how much he values and trusts his mentor's support.

Likewise, when discussing the importance of availability, Lando defined and explained the importance of care in his mentorships involving Black men at PWIs:

> They need to know that there is someone—at least one person—who actually cares for them, not for a check, not for an award, not in front of folks, but like just cares for them … They need to be able to have a fallout shelter and for somebody to be that fallout shelter for them …You need to be able to have a person you know regardless [of whether] they getting paid for this or not, regardless [of whether] they on the books to do

> this or not, regardless [of whether] they are a licensed professional counselor or not. This [person] cares about me and, if all else fails, shingles start falling, the floor falls out from under me, I know I can go to this person. Or if I'm really excited about something [and] I want somebody to celebrate with, I know I can go to this person … They need to know it's somebody [who] really cares.

Lando described the nature and importance that care plays within his mentorships of Black males at PWIs. He asserted that it is important for his Black male mentees to know that their mentor is strongly committed and deeply cares for their well-being. Within the context of a PWI where Black males are underrepresented, negatively stereotyped, experience racism, Lando states, "they [Black males] need to know it's somebody who really cares." Lando's mindset was that his mentees needed to know that their mentor is there to encourage them, support them through tough times, and celebrate their successes in life an academics.

As such, Lando intentionally found ways to show Author that he supported him and was committed to investing time in him. As he stated:

> I always wanted to support Author in every single thing he did. And anytime I heard there was a concert that Author was in I would show up just to make sure at some point I caught his eye and give him that fist! That's all I wanted to do and, as long as I got that one fist in and I know he saw me, I'm good I can leave. I got love for Author, man. I just want him to see and feel the love. I admire what he is doing…I want him to be encouraged to continue doing it … I want Author to see and know that I'm committed to you specifically.

What Lando described is the level of care that he intentionally shows to Author as a means to keep him encouraged and motived. Lando was intentional with showing Author that he cared and supported his academics and campus involvement. As Landon stated, "I just want him to see and feel the love." This indicates that Lando felt it was important to show support as an act of love that go beyond words of support. He felt that such acts allowed Author to "feel the love." As

such, his time investment and acts of care demonstrated his love and commitment toward Author's success. Furthermore, Lando mentions the importance of having celebrating the mentees accomplishments. Such acts help encourage the mentee, but also are validating and rewarding moments for the mentor. Likewise, the study revealed that the mentee participants felt reassured having someone who is there to listen to them.

Listening. The explicit act of listening was another important component of the mentorships in the study. The participants revealed that active listening was especially important in their current mentorships, as well as in their other experiences at their respective PWIs. Additionally, the importance of active listening within the mentorships was especially true given that many Black males, including the participants in this study, experienced dismissive behavior directed toward them at PWIs.

As such, Jefferies argued that communication, specifically listening, is as an important skill that is necessary in mentoring Black males. As Jefferies describes:

> Communication is a big skill…Just talking to that person and listening and I think that's the barrier between young Black males and the others is to listen. Sometimes, people are more talking at you then they are listening. And so as you're talking, in their head they are like, 'Alright, well how am I gonna respond to this? What am I gonna say' instead of taking it in and letting it marinade, pondering on it, and then responding. You have, with the current events that's been going on, people aren't listening. So, when somebody is not listening to you, you don't feel like you're being heard [so] you gotta figure out some other way to communicate if your words are not being picked up on.

Jefferies feels that Black males are not being heard and that "people aren't listening" and "people are more talking at you." He felt that Black males opinions and thoughts were not valued in society. As such, Jefferies associated the nationwide social protests and rallies in response to police shootings that had recently taken place Ferguson Missouri and Baltimore Maryland to

frustrations of Black males being undervalued and voices being unheard. As he stated, “you don’t feel like you’re being heard, so you gotta figure out some other way to communicate if your words are not being picked up on.” Jefferies felt that some Black males choose to communicate through their actions rather than through their words since society chooses not to hear their words. As such, he valued the idea of mentors deliberately and sincerely listening to what he has to say instead of always trying to figure out a response or rebuttal. For Jefferies, the mentor’s active listening within itself showed care and respect.

My conversation with Jefferies highlighted an unanticipated and unplanned outcome of our mentorship. As Jefferies indicated during our one-one-one interview, the police shootings of Michael Brown in Ferguson Missouri and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland were resent back-to-back police shootings of Black men that took place during a long series of police shootings of Black men that captured the attention of the nation. This was a time of anger, fear, and frustration for many Black men who felt undervalued, threatened, and targeted by our nation’s law enforcement and criminal justice system. This was at the apex of the Black Lives movement whose purpose was to bring attention to and combat police killings and the public marginalization of Black men, and of Black people at large. Conversations regarding the existence and impact of racism and violence directed towards Black men was a part of the public debate. Many Black men experienced feelings of anger, fear, and frustrations due to the police shootings; however, there was also anger and frustration due to society’s resentment and lack of acknowledgement of racism experienced by Black men in America. There was denial and attempts by many in society to attribute the shootings to factors outside of race. Attempts to attribute place blame on the actions on the victims rather than to racism.

For Jefferies, he felt that society was not willing to listen. He felt that people, meaning society at-large and White Americans, did not want to hear him express his fear, anger, and frustrations about what was going on. What I realized is that our one-on-one conversations during this time period was his only space to have a conversation and express how he was feeling. Our mentorship was the only opportunity for Jefferies to have his feelings heard, affirmed, and validated by someone who was experiencing the same feelings. I realized that our conversations was mutually beneficial and therapeutic for me as well. As much as I was there to listen to him, he also became a sounding board and someone to listen to me. This was an unintended outcome of our mentorship and it highlighted the importance of listening and the need for other to hear us.

Likewise, the other mentors in the study agreed that active listening was an important component in their mentorships. Leon asserted that "in any relationship, I think it is vital [to] listen and understand first, and then provide advice." Lando argued that listening and acting upon what one heard are key essentials to ensuring a mentorship connection. He argued that in mentorships with Black males at PWIs a mentor must both listen and take action in order to establish a connection. As he states, "listen to him, and once you've acted upon something that you've listened to him say, I believe that you've created a connection. I feel like you've got to act upon [it]." Lando's asserts that active listening, and acting upon it is important in making a connection within the mentorship. Lando expressed how listening was an important component of the various relationships he experienced with faculty and staff at HBCUs, which he asserted as acts of care.

In addition, Leon provided a compelling glimpse into his beliefs on the power of active listening within the mentorship. As he described:

> I think at the core of mentoring relationships [there is a] humanizing element that can only happen through hearing someone else. I think a mentoring relationship emphasizes that. To me, it's foundational. You can't mentor someone that you don't know…we've all had someone that just talks to you and your like, 'You don't even know what I need.'

Leon's comments echoed Jefferies previous statement about listening. When giving advice on the best way to provide mentorship to an undergraduate Black male, Jefferies described how listening is within itself is an act of caring. Furthermore, the act of listening goes beyond hearing, rather the mentor must attempt to understand that his student's need or request for help may not be direct. Leon suggest that there is a "humanizing element" in mentorships that can only happen in active listening. Meaning, the act of listening demonstrates respect for the other and acknowledges their needs as an individual.

The importance of listening is especially true for Black male mentees who may not feel listened to or respected. Additionally, Jefferies explains that it is important to listen in mentorships involving Black males in order to capture the true meaning in their words that may be difficult to express or understand if the mentor does not truly listen. As Jefferies explained:

> Listen, listen, listen because somebody needs help. Somebody is in trouble. They're communicating to you somehow. It may not be a direct [as in], 'I need help, I'm in trouble,' but they may word it in a way. There may be some key words in there that may be alarming and arising and causing attention. And so just kind of listen and pay attention because sometimes there may not be an answer, but just the fact that you're listening to that person is mutually helpful...A lot of times people don't have someone they can talk to or they feel comfortable talking to without being necessarily judged…Sometimes they just want somebody to hear what they have to say.

As a communication major, Jefferies appreciated and enjoyed the dialogue within our mentorship. For him, the act of listening is much more valued and appreciated than the expectation of his mentor providing him with the right answer. And the idea of listening and

displaying sincere care, even without the expectation of providing an answer or solution, is still helpful. Within my mentorship with Jefferies, he openly showed appreciation for the moments when he had the time and space to simply talk about everything that was on his mind. For him, it was therapeutic and demonstrated an act of care on my behalf.

Malik echoed Jefferies thinking that the mentor's willingness to listen was more valuable than the ability of the mentor to provide the right answer or right response when mentoring undergraduate Black males. Likewise, Malik valued the challenge in figuring out his own solution and answers to situations rather than always relying on his mentor to provide him the solution. Malik believed a mentee's ability to figure things out for himself actually helps him develop the ability to think. Malik explained further when discussing the advice that he would give mentors of undergraduate Black males. As describes:

> Listen [and] help where you can. That don't mean give him the answers. Sometimes, you have to let them challenge themselves because that's the only way they'll think. Don't…nah they not going to look down at you. That's basically it – just be cool, be yourself, don't try to elevate yourself to [something] higher than what you are – just try and help them.

Malik advice indicates how important a mentor's active listening and presence is important in the mentorship. Along with active listening, Malik's assertion also indicated the importance of the mentor's sense of comfort within the mentorship when stating, "Just be cool, be yourself, don't try to elevate yourself to [something] higher that what you are." In this narration, Malik described the importance of the mentor's authenticity within the mentorship. The participants repeated this concept throughout the study.

“Be Real!”: Authentic

As such, along with the importance of availability, care, and listening, the concept of authentic character was another factor that was important within the mentorships. The importance of this concept was specifically associated with the role of the mentor. For example, in regards to the authenticity of the mentors, Lando states, “I don't think you can teach that. That is something that has to be in them. You have to sincerely and authentically care for that person…that's an innate element.” Meaning, it was Lando’s belief that one’s level of authenticity is not something that a mentor can replicate or simulate.

Lando continued to describe the idea of authenticity when discussing his relationship with Author. As he states, “I feel like he viewed me as somebody [to whom he] didn't feel the need to give fluff, or the right answer, or the ‘politically right answer.’ I tell all the students straight up exactly what I think.”

Lando believed that his level of honesty and authentic character was something that his student recognized and appreciated. In turn, Lando believed that his students returned his authenticity with their own honesty and authenticity. As a result, Lando argues that his mentees’ felt comfortable with their ability to be honest in their mentorships with him.

From the mentees’ perspective, Jefferies also mentioned the importance of authenticity when discussing his preferences. He explained how easy it is to recognize is not being authentic or true to themselves. Jefferies suggested that a lack of authenticity hurts the formation of mentorships, and influences the level of trust and information shared within the mentorship. As Jefferies explains:

> I think if you can't do it, [then] don't do it – don't force it. Because from a student standpoint, they can tell when you’re like, yeah they’re trying to force it, and so now it

> doesn’t feel real genuine. So they say that they’re there, but it’s like they’re not really there. It’s kinda important if they can talk to you about something personal.

Jefferies willingness and comfort with sharing his personal information related to how he viewed his mentor’s genuineness. Jefferies statement that “they’re not really there” suggest that such mentors are physically present, but not fully invested in the mentorship. Consequently, if the mentor is not genuine and present in such circumstances Jefferies is not willing to share something personal.

The concept of authenticity was also apparent within the mentorship involving between Malik and Leon. For Malik, authenticity, or “being real,” was important with establishing trust and legitimacy within their mentorship. For Malik, “being real” was simply someone who was true to himself, honest, and not afraid to tell him the unapologetic, unedited truth about what it takes to be successful as a Black man in American society. As Malik states:

> Like I said, if [Leon] was a cornball or something like that we may not get along. I want somebody more down to Earth. Somebody [whose] gonna tell me what it is and what I need to do to get there… Honestly what I said earlier – me personally I'm the type that you can tell me one thing. And when you tell me I want you to give me the formal way to go about it, and then I want you to tell me how to do it in real terms. Just keep it real with me and tell me what I need to do. I'd rather them tell me, “Malik, get your shit together” rather than “Alright now, it’s time to get it together.” Nah, “Malik, get your shit together.” Alright I'm gonna do it. So, just be honest with me, keep it real with me.

Malik judged a mentor’s authenticity on whether the mentor possessed a level of comfort, but also on the mentor’s willingness to be honest in their assessment of his actions and performance. He saw efforts of politeness or protecting his feelings as inauthentic and less useful to his success. Malik valued and wanted his mentors to challenge him.

Challenge

Along with the perception of availability, care, listening, and authenticity within the mentorships, the mentors mentioned that challenging the mentee is an important aspect of their mentorships. Likewise, the mentees described how they appreciated their mentors' challenges. Malik described how he prefers to be challenged when describing a conversation as such, "Malik, get your shit together. Alright Im' gonna do it. So, just be honest with me. Keep it real with me". In this this particular reference, Malik not only wants his mentors to be "real" with him, he also wants them to challenge him. In some sense, Malik is motivated when challenged in a direct way. He views the mentor's authenticity and the act of providing a challenge as a means of showing sincerity and care. Malik described how Leon challenged him to do proactive things that he normally would not do on his own. As he describes:

> With Leon…well Leon is the only person I really consider a mentor, because he made me do some stuff I wasn't going to do. It was simple, it was plan out my schedules next couple of semesters, but I never planned on doing that. I'm more of the go with the flow type and he's like, 'No, you need to get a projected graduation date. You need to calculate your GPA to get where you want to be by the time you graduate. You need to make your schedule for the next couple of semesters so you know where you need to be.' And I would say it was the right decision. I probably needed that because its hard for the most part when you're working and school, and then life hits you at the same time, so I would say the experience is pretty cool. He's helped me a lot actually…Yeah, I did expect that honestly, but I didn't think to a certain degree that he was gonna make me like write my own schedule and stuff. Then he made me calculate my GPA. Then he made me strive harder. I said I want like 3.2 by the time I graduate and he said, 'ok that's nice, how about we go for a 3.5.' I'm like, 'I'll try.'

Malik response indicates that he appreciated Leon requesting him to take proactive steps towards learning more about his academic progress. He described how Leon emphatically said "no", and did not except Malik's "go with the flow" mentality in regards to better understanding his status and estimated degree completion. Leon also helped Malik set higher expectations for himself, while communicating to Malik that he expected more from him. Likewise, Leon's insistence that

Malik take specific actions increased Malik's awareness of his academic progress, but the actions also validated Leon's care for Malik's wellbeing. Malik acknowledged that he would not have taken action unless Leon convinced him, which he recognized and appreciated.

As mentioned, the mentors in the study also expressed the importance of challenging their mentee. For example, a great deal of challenging took place within the mentorship involving Mr. Scott and James. Within this mentorship, Mr. Scott based his approach to mentoring James on his own personal philosophy and approach to mentoring. As Mr. Scott describes:

> So I approach mentoring different as you know. I'm not gonna drag nobody nowhere they don't want to go. At the same time I really want to know who you are, and that has always been my question. Who are you and what do you want and how can I help you get there?

Mr. Scott believed his responsibility within the mentorship was to provide tough guidance through challenging and supporting James in areas of personal weakness. He felt that James was an underachiever who did not exert enough care and energy into his studies and career pursuits. As a way to motivate James, Mr. Scott challenged James to question whether he was living and operating according the beliefs and philosophy of his fraternity—an area in which James spent a lot of time and personal investment. Mr. Scott described the conversation that he had with James about his Fraternity with the following:

> "I need you to really think about do you deserve to wear those letters today. And if you say yes, then the things that you demonstrate from this point forward will be a reflection of the principals and the values that the organization holds. And, if you don't do that, then you need to take the letters off." [James] was shocked that I would even bring into question his personal integrity with that of the letters he wore. And I said, "When you pledge the organization, you agree to the principles of manhood that it ascribes to and your behavior does not indicate that you are growing into a man." And I said, "Why are we here?"

Mr. Scott challenged James by calling into question his actions and behavior as being outside of the principles and values of his own fraternity. Mr. Scott intentionally used James association with his fraternity as a means to challenge him. Although James underachieved in his academic and career pursuits, he excelled in his activities in his fraternity. Mr. Scott saw James' behavior towards his academics as contradicting the philosophies of his fraternal organization. As such, Mr. Scott's challenging questions forced James to acknowledge that his behavior and attitude towards his academics did not properly represent the organization that he loved and admired.

During his personal interview, James indicated that a person had never challenged him in that manner that Mr. Scott challenged him during their mentoring meetings. However, he admitted that Mr. Scott's challenges helped him grow and work harder. As James states:

> Sometimes, I would say that I get too comfortable. Everybody has that time when they get comfortable with where they are with themselves and they don't really see much change or much of a difference at that time. But once somebody gets you out your comfort zone, you're exposed to a lot more things and a lot more understandings than [what] you had before. … Now, I actually appreciate it. … For the most part, being pushed through this mentoring process has made me want to do a lot more than where I was before.

James admitted that Mr. Scott's challenges made him feel uncomfortable. He was not comfortable with Mr. Scott's blunt tone and critiques of his behavior and attitude towards his academics. Mr. Scott's assertions and direct challenges embarrassed him. However, James admitted that his lack of effort towards his academics was due to being too comfortable. Meaning, he did not have anyone who both challenged and encouraged him to do better. Although he admittedly did not always like Mr. Scott's challenges, he understood that his approach came from a source of care. As a result, James believed the experience made him more

ambitious. As he stated, “now I actually appreciate it.” Mr. Scott provided him with the proper motivation to increase his level of commitment and effort given to his academic work.

As such, James’ statement indicated that he appreciated the mentorship experience with Mr. Scott. Their mentorship reflected both unique and common elements of mentoring that the other participants shared within the study. The participants’ narratives indicated that their mentorships, which involved availability, listening, authenticity, and challenging as acts of care, is especially critical at their respective PWIs where they experienced hostility.

Campus Not Made for US

When discussing the status of Black men on campus and in society in general, Malik emphatically described his thoughts as stated:

> First of all we now that America was not made for us. Well most of us do. Some of us may not agree, but I do. I don’t believe America was made for us. Even like if it was, I think it would be a totally different place.

Malik’s proclaimed that America was “not made for us.” As he mentioned, “some might not agree” with that belief, but he experienced led him to believe and affirm that he lived in a society that was not created with his race and culture in mind. Consequently, he experiences as a college student affirmed his belief that Urban University was “not made for us.”

The men in this study experienced numerous challenges at the PWIs that they attended. They recognized that their identities as Black males influenced how others perceived and treated them. Their shared narratives represented a sum of experiences that depicted campuses that were not only hostile, but also institutions not made for them. Nevertheless, the student participants in the study provide narratives of how they chose to attend their respective institutions, and the results of their choice.

Why am I here? It is imperative to understand, and perhaps question, the participants' choice to attend PWIs, especially in consideration of the chronicled harsh experiences and campus climate experiences of Black men at PWIs. Although there are a number of factors exist that determine where Black students choose to attend college, including social and cultural value purposes, the literature suggests that proximity to home, financial affordability and academic reputation play greater factors in determining their college choice (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Freeman & Brown II, 2005; Scott, 2014). Likewise, the undergraduate men in this study choice to attend college based on those three factors.

Specifically, Jefferies and James based their decision to attend Urban University on its proximity to their hometown, although financial affordability also played into James' decision to attend Urban University. Likewise, Malik and Chris both strongly considered attending HBCUs instead of Urban University and Research University, but financial affordability affected their decision. Research University was a top choice due to its academic reputation and academic and degree programs, although he also strongly considered an HBCU but the costs did not allow him.

PWI v HBCUs. The participants in the study often negatively compared their lived experiences at their PWIs to what they imagined their college experiences would have been like at an HBCU. As previously described, when compared to those who attend PWIs, Black students who attend HBCUs exhibit a positive cultural awareness; increased confidence; are more integrated in the academic life of the campus; and perceive their campuses as providing more institutional support (Davis, 1994; Palmer & Wood, 2012). Black students at HBCUs confirm that their academic performance is due to their abilities to focus on their academic pursuits with as much distractions, due to the absence of the negative environmental factors experienced by Black students who attend PWIs (Bonner & Bailey, 2006).

In regards to the nurturing environments expressed by students who attended HBCUs, Lando described the impactful encounters that he and other Black males experienced when interacting with Black male faculty and staff at such institutions.

> When you see these other Black [faculty and staff] males you would stand up a little taller. You would stop cutting up as much and say, ‘YES, SIR!’ They expected you to be better. They told you that you was gonna be something, and you said ‘yes sir, I'm gonna be something.’ You didn't feel bad about saying ‘yes, sir’ to them or feel funny because that's how they talk to you. It almost felt like they would give me some kind of mutual respect even though they clearly have a real job over you...They were giving respect to us as Black males and we felt completely free and open to give them respect right back. And it just made us, and it stuck with me.

This narrative describes the importance that Lando placed on the presence of Black male faculty and staff on the HBCU campuses that he experienced. He depicted experiences in which the Black male faculty and staff members communicated positive expectations of the Black male students. His statement that, “They expected you to be better. They told you that you was gonna be something.” demonstrated the strong impact of positive expectations. The undergraduate Black males on campus wanted to be better and believed they could do better because of the Black male faculty and staff who communicated such expectations.

Likewise, he described experiences in which a reciprocated respect existed between the Black male students and older Black male faculty and staff. As he stated, “they were giving respect to us as Black males and we felt completely free and open to give them respect right back.” The idea of an exchange of mutual respect was very evident in Lando’s accounts of the faculty and staff at the HBCUs that he experienced. His accounts illuminate the idea that faculty and staff at HBCUs demonstrated their respect and care for their students through acts of sincere listening. As Lando described:

> Like I said, they listen...It wasn't just like you talking and they just waiting for you to get done so they could walk away. They would actually engage in a conversation with you and, if you told them something they didn't know, they would actually go with what you told them. They understood. You get in trouble at school, you could actually go to the administrators and talk to them about what's going on. And they would LISTEN to you. They would listen and say, 'look I understand why you were cutting up in this way, so let's try to see if we can do these things to modify the behavior.'

Lando believed that the faculty and staff at HBCUs actually listened and attempted to understand Black male students, instead of prejudging or stereotyping them. Lando explained that Black undergraduate males do not often feel listed to, understood, or believed. Just as important, the students recognized that the faculty and staff cared enough to listen and understand.

Landon's experience depicts a positive tone, level of support, encouragement and collective responsibility for one another that is present at HBCUs. As he explained:

> At Black colleges, we're like 'brother, you ain't gonna make it unless the brother on the left and the right make it – that's the only way you gonna make it. That's the only way you gonna make it is if everybody make it…' It was instilled in us [that] no matter what our major is, no matter whether we graduate or not, it is our responsibility to go back and serve that village. Enter to learn, depart to serve. Not, 'I must go do research.' You left to go do something for people.

The shared and reciprocated respect and care between the Black male students and the Black male faculty and staff provided a mutually nurturing environment. As Lando explained, these examples of care stuck with him and influenced his mentorships of Black males at PWIs.

As a doctoral student and mentor of several undergraduate Black males at a PWI, Lando's previous undergraduate and professional experience at an HBCU led to his belief that PWIs are not healthy environments for Black males. When describing the developmental experiences of Black males at PWIs in comparison to those who attend HBCUs, Lando described the following:

> I believe it's detrimental, DETRIMENTAL. I see a lot of lower-level self-confidence, self-efficacy, [and] self-worth out of the Black men at predominately white institutions [in comparison] to the Black males that I saw at our [PWIs].

Lando operated from the belief that environmental factors such as institutional racism, negative stereotyping, racial-microaggressions, and the lack of cultural inclusion within the curriculum negatively impacts the self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-worth of the Black men who attend PWIs. He believed that undergraduate Black males benefit more developmentally from the supportive HBCU environments that affirm their cultural identity.

Along those lines, during an exchange in the joint interview with Malik and Leon, the mentor Leon theorized that a HBCUs' supportive environment would have possibly been a more welcoming environment for Malik. When thinking about the challenges that Malik experienced at Urban University, Leon shared with Malik that it was his belief that it was a greater chance that faculty at an HBCU would have better understood, supported and nurtured Malik's Black expression and his intellectual curiosity to learn more about the Black experience. As Leon stated:

> I didn't go to a HBCU, but, in that idealized world that I've created, I think your intellectual curiosity would have been interpreted differently. I think you would have been in a philosophy class and one professor would have said, 'yes, that was my interpretation – we gonna write, we gonna publish, we gonna read some things together.' I imagine the likelihood of that happening would have been greater at a HBCU versus here because faculty here—faculty here, and I'm not gonna say faculty at HBCU's don't have stereotypes about Black students, but I think faculty here are less likely to interpret your Black expression as something negative versus something positive even though at your core you are an intellectual scholar.

Leon's statement to Malik regarding the differences between his current experiences at his PWI versus what he beliefs might have been his experience at a HBCU, illuminated the idea that Leon

believed and understood that Malik's PWI experience did not provide the nurturing and supportive environment that Malik deserved and desired. Leon recognized and affirmed Malik's feelings of marginalization and isolations due to his professors' inability to understand and support his Black expression. As such, he used their mentorship as way to affirm Malik's Black expression and intellectual curiosity—referring to Malik as an "intellectual scholar".

Leon and Malik's impression supports the existing literature that indicates HBCUs do a better job at educating Black males in relation to their academic achievement and level of college satisfaction (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Palmer & Wood, 2012; Robert, Davis, & Dina, 2010). However, such confirmed evidence makes one question why so many Blacks students, specifically Black males, would decide to attend a PWI. This was a question explored during the interviews

The study provided a counter-narrative to the idea that many Black students choose to attend PWIs because of the perceived notions of a superior education. In fact, the study revealed that they preferred an HBCU education to a PWI experience, but state policy limited their college choice options.

Harper et al (2009) examined access and equity of Black students in higher education through the lens of Bell (1980) concept of interest-convergence, which is a central tenet of critical race theory. Interest-convergence argues that society only accommodates racial equity in the interest of Blacks when such interests converge with the interest of Whites (Bell, 1980; Gillborn, 2013; Harper et al). The researchers used Bell's concept and argument that significant historical events that influenced access and equity in education, such as the Brown v Board of Education legal decision, was not a result of the moral enlightenment of society, rather such decisions were possible only when the results also favored the interest of White Americans

(Harper et al, 2009). Consequently, Harper et al (2009) argued that historically access to PWIs for Black students happened when it favored the interest of Whites. In the case of the participants, the study revealed that state financial aid resources were available to the students to support their college costs; however, the state scholarship was only available in a manner that supported the interest of the state's PWIs.

As a result, although attending an HBCU was a first preference for some of the participants in the study, the men mentioned money as the primary reason that they did not attend an HBCU. Specifically, Chris, Author, and Malik were each eligible for a particular state funded scholarship, which pays the full tuition costs for low-income students who attend an accredited in-state college or university. However, there is not an HBCU located within their state. Consequently, the lack of an HBCU in their state limited their choices of where to attend college. The men had to choose between attending an HBCU of their choice out of state, or receive their full tuition paid at an in-state PWI.

This dilemma forced the participants to choose in-state PWIs for the purpose of financial security. As result, the policy essentially forced them to attend institutions that were not their first option. More daunting, they essentially did not have the opportunity to choose institutions that research suggests is in their best academic and psychosocial interest. The participants recognized this educational opportunity gap as result of the state policy. As Malik described:

> Yea, I wanted to [attend an HBCU] bad! I wanted to apply to TSU, but I couldn't. I'm a [State Scholar] student, so it was like you gotta stay [in-state]. So, it was mainly between [Urban University], [Northwestern Research University] and [Research University].

As Malik described, he strongly desired to attend an HBCU, but he recognized that his state scholarship limited his college choice to in-state institutions. This reality was a strong disappointment to Malik.

Similarly, Author also desired to attend an HBCU over a PWI when deciding where to attend college. Like Malik, Author was a recipient of the State Scholar award. Consequently, his decision to attend Research University was due to the larger amounts of money that Research University offered him in comparison to what many HBCUs were able to offer him. As Author describes:

> I mean I'm here, I ain't gonna lie they gave me a lot more money than a lot of the Black colleges did. Some of them gave me full rides, but they didn't provide as much money as them [PWI], so I went with the PWI…the only reason I didn't go [to an HBCU] is because of in state tuition was so much cheaper because I already had the [State Scholarship Award].

Chris also experienced the same dilemma as Malik and Author. Chris originally desired to attend an HBCU, but the state policy forced Chris to choose between receiving the academic experience that he sought or choose to accept the scholarship provided by the state and the additional financial aid provided by Research University. As Chris explained when discussing his decision to attend Research University:

> Money! I was a [State Scholar] student. I knew I would have my tuition, housing, room and board covered. So for me, other than that, I wanted to go to an HBCU – I wanted to go to Howard, that was actually my top choice of schools that I wanted to go to. And I visited schools in Texas, but the reason I didn't is because Howard's tuition is so high and when I called and talked with them they said they didn't readily have scholarships available. If it weren't for [State Scholarship], I probably wouldn't have went to Research University. I would have considered a lot more schools. They are trying to hold the investment.

Chris statement that “they are trying to hold the investment” is in reference to state policy makers who want the allocated money for the state scholarship to remain within the state as means to hold onto the investment (i.e., money, students, etc.).

However, the state scholarship is not advantageous for students who desire to attend an HBCU. As a result, although research indicates that Black students are likely to be more successful at HBCUs due to environmental and support factors (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Palmer & Wood, 2012; Robert, Davis, & Dina, 2010), the state’s scholarship criteria essentially limit the opportunities of many Black students or any other student who may desire to attend an HBCU. As a result, students with limited financial resources must choose instead to attend one of the in-state PWIs for cost and affordability purposes.

This is an example of a state policy that puts the state’s perceived agenda and interests potentially ahead of the interests of such state citizens who would benefit from attending an HBCU. Specifically, the policy limited the opportunity of the Black male participants in this study who did not have the opportunity to choose an institution of their choice. Likewise, the study revealed the need for national policies that provide access and equity in terms of school choice in terms of student’s desire to attend college that affirm and support their racial/ethnic identities (Buras, 2013; Gillborn, 2013; Harper et al, 2009). Consequently, the participants in the study chose to attend their respective PWIs, which they later discovered to be hostile and unwelcoming.

“Try to Tear Us Down”: Stereotypes and Microaggressions. Higher education literature has well documented the hostile campus climate experiences reported by Black males who attend PWIs. As described in chapter two, Black males’ perceptions of their campuses’ racial climates are often shaped by their experiences in regard to negative stereotypes and racial

microaggressions (Aronson et al., 2002; Bonner & Bailey, 2006; Robertson & Mason, 2008; Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000; Swim et al., 2003; Vianden et al., 2012). Despite the notions of racial climate improvements, society still views Black males through the lens of inferiority and deficit thinking (Ford et al., 2008; Harper, 2009; Harper & Davis, 2012; Harper & Nichols, 2008; Horsford & Grosland, 2013). Such depictions perpetuate the false, negative stereotypes of Black males in education. As such, Black males are more likely than any other population to experience stereotype threats in educational settings (Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Racial-microaggressions are experiences that include subtle insults or subliminal jabs, which can be verbal, nonverbal and/or visual, directed toward people of color. Some argue that these insults are often delivered automatically or unconsciously (Solorzano et al., 2000); nevertheless, the insulted, marginalized feeling are often obvious. Although they did not always use the term, the participants within the study indicated their awareness of and experiences with racial-microaggressions. When discussing the stereotypes of Black males within society, the participants generalized, but were candid with their perceptions.

For example, the participants in the study often used the general term "society" when generalizing the stereotypes of Black males. They used the term "society" to refer to White-dominated viewpoints generally held by members of American society. The men in the study overwhelming believed that society harbored very negative thoughts regarding Black males. For example, when asked to describe how society view Black males such as himself, Malik responded, "Well, that's too easy. Let me see, thugs; don't care about our family; don't care for our children; don't respect nothing…in the legal system." His response describes how society stereotypes Black males as dangerous outlaws without regard for family values. In that regard,

Malik makes it a personal mission to live his life in a way that uniquely contradicts such stereotypes by exposing its falsehoods.

Likewise, Chris mentioned, “I think society projects a stereotype that we’re not intelligent, not hard working, not qualified and everything that we do is because of, not in spite of, our background.” Chris’ statement suggests that his experiences in life have taught him that society views Black males as anti-intellectual and lazy members of the population. He believes that society views Black males in college as recipients of undeserved and unfair beneficiaries of publically funded social programs. His experiences have caused him to perceive that people, especially non-Blacks or Whites, in society either do not realize or do not acknowledge the historical and contemporary barriers that Black males must subvert in order to achieve academic success. Chris’ account support the arguments of Horsford and Grosland (2013) who argues that failure of the U.S education system to address the needs of Black students has systematically worked to perpetuate the myth of Black inferiority.

Chris described how the existence of negative stereotypes and myths of Black male inferiority has influenced the perceptions that his non-Black peers have of him on campus. As Chris states:

> People look at me sideways whenever I tell them I'm doing this, or working with this place or that place. [If] it’s something seemingly more successful than what they are doing, [then] they always want to question why did you get this opportunity, or why do you do that, why do you do this. They say that, ‘oh, you’re under this because you’re Black or you’re in this Black organization—[and] why not have this opportunity for everyone?’

Chris' negative experiences with his White college peers shed light on how perpetuated racial stereotypes of Black males create a set of negative beliefs within society regarding their intellectual abilities.

Chris explained how he experienced negative perceptions of his intelligence on campus and within the classroom.

> People would always ask me when I first got to campus if I played any sports. People wouldn't take me seriously in classes. I would be one of the last people to get picked for a group. People wouldn't readily come to me or look at me as someone knowledgeable, so I definitely felt marginalized.

Chris described feeling marginalized due to the negative stereotypes and low expectations regarding his intellectual and academic abilities that existed on campus. Society's low expectations of Black males permeate academia and are associated with the effects of stereotype threat, which is the risk confirming to negative stereotypes by living up to the low expectations of the stereotype (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Likewise, those individuals who hold such negative beliefs of Black males are likely to credit their academic achievements to unfair advantages granted to them by liberal policies—yet, exclude from consideration the historical inequities or racism that he has overcome.

As such, these false beliefs and views often lead to the idea that accomplishments by Black males are undeserved and come at the expense of more deserving, qualified others. As Chris explains:

> They don't realize what we had to overcome compared to them. I had this guy in my program, a White guy, both his parents had Ph.D's…he [lives in] my building and he's always questioning what I do because he obviously feels I'm not qualified, or [feels] he should be having that opportunity. So, they just really try to tear us down.

Chris' comment that "they just really try to tear us down" is compelling. He views their questioning of his academic merit and legitimacy as an attack—an attempt to undermine his achievements and qualifications as a means to tear him down. Moreover, his thoughts suggest that their attempts to question his merits and qualifications are not individual or isolated attempts to "tear us down," rather it is a group or systematic effort. Likewise, he recognizes that his experience is not unique due to the effects of the perpetuated negative stereotypes experienced by many Black males at PWIs.

In addition deficit perceptions, society inaccurately views and stereotypes Black males as a homogenous population. Harper and Nichols (2008) discussed the racial heterogeneity among Black males who are often stereotyped, overgeneralized, oversimplified and further marginalized due to false assumptions regarding their shared common experiences and backgrounds. Jefferies experienced this concept when stating that they should "treat us different because we're not the same person, we don't have the same backgrounds and I just feel sometimes we have to take the time to understand [that]." Jefferies comments reflect his frustrations and struggles with being associated with society's negative stereotypes of Black males. In addition, his statement reflects his frustration with others failing to see him as an individual with his own set of unique personal characteristics.

More daunting, the study revealed how Black males who do not fit society's negative racial stereotypes often experience encounters with individuals who question their cultural creditability and the nature of their Blackness. These Black males experience encounters with others who view them as an enigma who does not quite fit with their preconceived socially constructed expectations. As Jefferies explains:

> You would hear 'you're not like,' or 'you don't act this way' or 'you don't talk that way' in reference to a typical African-American male that the world may encounter…we have this notion or this concept where we like to box people in. So, I'm boxed in with every other Black male…I'm not the White kid, I'm not an Asian kid, I'm not Hispanic, so I don't fit into any box. It's kind of like, sometimes, I feel like people may not understand or know how to categorize me—at least after meeting me and talking to me. And, sometimes, you hear, 'oh you're a lot smarter than I thought,' or 'you knew more than I thought you knew,' or 'you know a lot more [than I expected] kind of thing.'

Jefferies' narrative, like Chris' narrative, demonstrates how their non-Black or White peers easily accepted and attached negative, false stereotypes to how they expected them to react and behave. As such, Chris and Jefferies' actual behaviors and personas, which are not in fact on the peripheral of their culture or identity, presented a conflict between society's negative portrayals of Black men and what their White peers actually saw portrayed. Jefferies did not live up to the negative stereotypes of Black males, as a result, his peers saw him as an enigma. Both Jefferies and Chris received subliminal comments, or microaggressions, which suggested that they surprised their peers with their intelligence and ability to articulate themselves.

These microaggressions experienced by Jefferies and Chris regarding their abilities and intelligence were not subtle or unnoticed. These experiences were insulting and marginalizing to both Chris and Jefferies. In their minds, such encounters revealed and affirmed the negative perceptions that society holds regarding Black males. Due to their experiences with stereotyping and microaggressions, the participants in the study did not feel fully understood or welcomed at their institutions. They viewed this treatment as attempts to undermine their academic success. As Chris emphatically described, "they just really try to tear us down"

I'm There, But not There. The mentees in the study shared depictions of hostile and unwelcoming experiences that occurred both inside and outside of their classrooms. The men not only described negative classroom experiences that involved students of other racial and ethnic

groups, they also described negative experiences in the classroom that involved the curriculum that reflected Western, or White, cultural values and norms. James' experience reflects idea of white supremacy within the curriculum highlighted by researchers who expose the motives and broader impact of education policy and curriculum design and content that does not reflect people of color (Buras, 2013; Gillborn, 2013). Specifically, Gillborn (2013) research highlighted intentional actions taken by policy makers to eliminate race conscious curriculum designed for particular racial/ethnic groups, despite the positive academic outcomes experienced by the racial/ethnic minority students. The author states that the justification for such action included the desire to eliminate anti-American or anti-White curriculum content for the preservation of White supremacy (Gillborn, 2013).

The participants in this study described how their disconnection with the curriculum led to their disengagement in the classroom. For example, James described his experiences within one of his classes:

> I'm around different diversities and different ethnicities, but when I'm in class its taught toward a certain crowd, not necessary saying it's geared toward the White or the Caucasian crowd, but it's not very interesting to me because the things that I hear or the voices that I hear I cannot relate with. For instance in class today, I had a teacher who was talking about his experiences with flying all over the country talking about the corporate world that he works in. And [I'm] not saying that it's not inspiring, but the way he displays himself it's not very true. A lot of times I'm not in class. I'm there, but I'm not there and I'm not really engaged… I hear stories from my peers, my friends. They feel like they are not very well engaged. Many of my classes are with friends and frat brothers. I can look over and see that they are not as engaged as they should be. They are listening and taking notes, but sometimes it seems like their mind is in a different place… I can tell that they are not intrigued—they're bored.

The disconnection that James described often led to his disengagement in the classroom. His narrative recalled a classroom setting in which a White male instructor whose examples of personal lifestyle and set of experiences were unfamiliar and/or unreal to James. While he found

the stories inspiring, he did not believe them to be true to his life. James did not relate to or see himself within the life story of his instructor, whose own personal narratives were not relatable to James' experiences as a 23-year-old Black male. Most importantly, he did not see any attempts of the instructor to forge a connection with him.

James account also revealed that his Black peers experienced similar feelings and behaviors of disconnect in the classroom. The absence of their culture identity within the classroom and university setting was noticeable. Their experiences of disconnect made them feel as though they were less valuable, insignificant, or did not matter to the institution. The absence of their history and cultural perspectives from the curriculum suggested to the participants that the university deemed their race and cultural as less significant. As Jefferies' explains:

> Being at a PWI you don't have as many minorities, and so you don't count as often. And our lives and how we react and how we respond to things are different than that of our counterparts of the Caucasian ethnicity, or however you want to say it. So, a Black kid and White kid being that they are brought up differently, their outlook on life is completely different, so when you put both of them in the same class and you have them read one chapter – that Black kid may read that chapter in a whole different way than that White kid may read it. Same book, same pages, but different perception and, sometimes, I feel like you have to be more open to that and more understanding. Not saying you have to completely reconstruct your curriculum, but I feel like, overall, as far as education goes, it has to be. It's not equal. There is lack of resources for people of different races, different ethnicities. And, so, everybody is expected to learn the exact same way or move forward and prosper in the exact same way, but when you have different starting points…It has to start somewhere; like something has to happen to a point where there is some kind of common ground.

The study reveals that Jefferies' wants the curriculum and instruction to reflect his unique background and experiences. Likewise, he would prefer the curriculum and instruction in the classroom to recognize that his life experiences are different from those experiences of a typical White student. During his interview, Jefferies used the example of how a Black student and a White student may have contrasting interpretations of reading a passage based on their distinct

cultural backgrounds. When discussing the needs of faculty acknowledgment of cultural differences in the classroom, Jefferies argues, "you have to be more open to that and more understanding." His statement indicates that faculty members do not acknowledge cultural differences within the classroom. Likewise, his experiences indicate that the institution largely ignores or denies the presence of cultural bias and its significance within the curriculum. Likewise, Jefferies stated that things are not equal, yet "everyone is expected to learn the exact same way and move forward and prosper in the exact same way." Jefferies' experiences and the accounts of the other men are examples of institutionalized racism that favors Whiteness over all races and cultures.

Consequently, Malik explained how the lack of Blackness within the curriculum encouraged him to seek out knowledge about the Black experience on his own. He felt an obligation and a necessary personal need to learn more about Black history and culture, which provided him with a greater sense of empowerment and cultural appreciation. An experience that he felt compelled to share with other Black students. As he describes:

> That's why I try to encourage people my age, especially Black ones to read. Don't read no intro to American History. Nah, read some stuff that was made for you by people like you. And if you get a sense of that you're going to get an understanding of where we coming from. But what really opened up my eyes was the New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander. It just opened my eyes up. It's like the more you read the more you realize that you don't know nothing. So now I'm sitting here and we talking about the jails and mass incarceration. I'm reading that book and I'm like wondering who would I align more with, Malcolm X or Martin Luther King? Ok, so now I'm reading Malcolm X and Malcolm X say something interesting. Then I'm like, let me find a book topic on that. Now I'm reading….like the Souls of Black Folks. I got a whole list on my phone of books that I need to order. So the more that we become self-conscious the more we change about the media, the self-hate, all that stuff that got to do with us.

As Malik expressed that the importance of reading literature "that was made for you by people like you." He further explained that "you're going to get an understanding of where we coming," which increased his desire to read and learn more. Malik experienced cultural affirmation and

empowerment from reading Black history and culture, which he argued "the more that we become self-conscious, the more we change about the media, the self-hate, and all that stuff that got to do with us." Malik response indicated that understood that reading about Black history and culture provides the ability to challenge false negative stereotypes perpetuated by society through media outlets. Although Malik had a desire to educate himself through reading, the absence of Blackness in the curriculum, along with the totality of other negative experiences, leads many Black students feeling ignored and pacified at PWIs.

"Shoo," get out of my face: Pacified. In addition to the absence of their culture within the curriculum, the participants explained that they experienced pacification on campus. The participants' narratives include experiences in which faculty and administrators expressed or demonstrated a reluctance to engage in a genuine, sincere exchange with them. Such experiences occurred during exchanges with faculty and administrators who the participants typically encountered throughout their activities as undergraduate students on campus. As with other examples of racial-microaggressions, such incidents of pacification are usually subtle, but explicit. The participants' examples included incidents in which the students' presence, questions, or concerns did not feel validated or acknowledged. Jefferies describes his feelings of pacification when recounting his typical experience with faculty on campus. As Jefferies explains:

> Our [department] professors don't post grades, so you're curious and want to know where you are in the class, and they will say, 'Oh no, don't worry, you should be fine—you do this, you will be okay.' But your okay and my okay could be two different things, or your okay could be a "D" and that might not be okay with me. Your okay could be an "A" and my okay could be a "C"…that could be typical voice recorder response as far as, 'Okay, I'm gonna say what I can and "shoo" get out of my face, get out of my office, so I can go.'

Jefferies instructors gave him the impression that they do not wish to engage in conversations regarding his academic performance. The responses he often received from instructors seemed insincere and without genuine care or regard for his academic success. His statement that his instructors behaved as though they were saying, “I’m gonna say what I can and ‘shoo’ get out of my face, get out of my office so I can go” spoke to the pacification and passive-aggressive tone he experienced on campus—experiences that he associated with being a Black male at a PWI.

James echoed Jefferies’ narrative when recalling his interaction with university personnel associated with campus student services. Like Jefferies, James described feelings of pacification and a reluctance to engage when encountering university personnel when seeking services. As he described:

> Sometimes, when we get advising, they don't necessarily help us see [or understand] the whole plan to graduate. It's more like, ‘okay, you need to take this class, this class, sign up, and get out of my office kind of feeling.’

Jefferies and James’ narratives described what they viewed as the implicit pacification and biased thoughts of their professors and university administrators. Both participants sensed that the faculty member and staff member told them whatever was necessary in order to appease them and shorten their interactions. Such behavior communicated to both participants that their concerns and presence were not valued or respected. The participants’ narratives indicate that the faculty member and staff members’ behavior suggested a disregard for the students’ academic success and an overall explicit disinterest or passive-aggressive resentment toward their presence.

In contrast, Author experienced a type of pacification behavior with a White faculty member that was unrelated to their willingness engage. Rather, Author believed that his

professor held a false presumption regarding the value that Black males placed on their education. As he explained:

> I remember taking my English class my freshman year…I wish he actually either gave me a lower grade or failed me…instead of passing me on and being passive about it…I think that's what I appreciate even about a lot of the Black staff that I work with – not just Black staff -- a lot of people in my department that are very great educators and their approach to teaching is a way that's not passive, its very much so you do the work and you get results; it’s not we just need to pass you on so you can get your degree.

Author’s believed that his professor’s action depicted a false assumption regarding Black males regarding their intellectual abilities and academic desire to both learn and succeed. In this particular case, Author’s instructor gave him a higher grade without merit. Author did not feel comfortable with the grade that he received because he felt that he did not earn the grade, but, just as important, he wanted to learn something from the class. He did not respect his instructor’s approach and felt that his instructor gave him a higher grade due to compassionate feelings for him as a Black male. Author assumed that his instructor had the best intentions and speculated that his instructor mistakenly assumed that he was doing an act of social justice on his behalf. However, Author did not want an academic handout or special treatment due to his Black male identity; instead, he wanted his professor to grade him fairly. He wanted to learn something from the course. Author’s experience explicitly demonstrates that he did not want favorable grading or special treatment for being a Black male; rather, he recognized that such treatment was academically damaging in the end. He instead desired equitable treatment that was non-deficit and true of his academic performance.

In contrast, Authored valued his experiences from Black faculty who were non-deficit in their approach and challenged him in ways that signified their validation of his intellectual ability and recognized his desire to learn. He perceived their approach as behavior that demonstrated

genuine care for his academic success. Although they were tougher on him and held higher expectations, Author viewed their actions as affirmation of their personal care. As such, he appreciated and valued their approach to his learning. Author felt fortunate because he frequently interacted with Black faculty due to the number of Black faculty within his department. Although the other student participants in the study expressed as desire for more connections with Black faculty and staff, they were not as fortunate as Author. The other participants did not have the same opportunity to interact with Black faculty who were able role model and provide a guide to success. They did not have the opportunity to talk with other Black males who can say I have been in your position before.

Been There Before

The student participants in the study described how the support of their mentors and other Black males on campus positively affected their college experience. Likewise, the mentors within the study shared a perceived personal responsibility, personal desire, and believed unique ability to support and influence the experiences of the Black undergraduate men in the study. The participants described the mentorships involving Black male mentors and Black male mentees as necessary and unique because of their shared cultural understanding. As such, the participants in the study shared some common and unique insights of how their mentorships were mutually beneficial and valued because one had “been there before”.

Mutuality. Mutuality within mentorships refers to the shared exchange of knowledge and experience that benefits both participants (Beyene et al., 2002; Fagenson-Eland, Baugh, & Lankau, 2005; Young & Perrewé, 2000). In such instances, the mentorship is reciprocal in nature. While sharing their mentorship experiences, the participants in this study described the mutuality that existed within their relationships. As Leon described:

> I think of mentorship as sort of an ongoing journey that’s mutually beneficial. Good mentoring is mutually beneficial, so it's not just one way. [It is not] the mentor just funneling all this knowledge through the mentee, there is this reciprocal relationship where the mentor learns through the mentee as well.

Leon description of mentoring is indicative of how the study’s participants believed there is knowledge and learning exchanged between both participants. Consequently, their shared accounts indicate there are mutual benefits for both the mentor and mentee participating in the mentorship.

For example, Lando expressed enthusiasm in mentoring and playing a role in Author’s personal and academic growth. He also enjoyed witnessing Author’s maturity play out within the university setting in various ways, which provided Lando with a sense of pride and joy. As he described:

> I felt invested in Author and invested in Author's future and I was excited to see where Author was going to go. I enjoyed seeing Author's maturity, I enjoy seeing his calm demeanor and I enjoy watching his silent leadership and it was very clear that he had a lot of influence without doing some big and loud thing. He just seem like he got it together and [was] confident and I just enjoy watching that and being able to see a Black man get it. Even though I am trying to tell him stuff. I also picked up from him [things] like sometimes it's cool to be smooth, man.

Lando’s more boisterous, and somewhat eccentric, personality was in contrast to Author’s more subtle, subdued personality. Lando appreciated their distinctive personalities and grew to understand how Author’s personality and demeanor provides him with solace. Likewise, Author appreciated the attention from Lando and his other Black male mentors.

Likewise, Author expressed a need to observe and learn how to be successful from his mentors. As a Black male, Author felt that he needed to see the behavior and actions of older, successful Black males to help guide his own success. As he stated, “I need to be around Black men and see

how they get there, how do they stay here, and what they do on this campus to sustain themselves." In addition to witnessing their behavior, the Black male mentors were also people who related to Author on a personal level due to their shared backgrounds.

The other mentees in the study emphasized and shared the idea of relatability and the importance of having mentors who could relate to their experiences and provide them with guidance on how to succeed. As Malik explained:

> So, it's like seeing somebody where you want to be. It helps you to maybe maneuver your lifestyle to where you're like, 'Well, maybe I don't need to handle this issue this way. Maybe if I go around it and show them that I'm not the stereotypical Black man or what you all confined me into a box.' I just see it as good.

Malik recounted how it is important to have a relationship with someone who is in a position in life where he wants to be. Malik's account also highlights the importance that he places on having a mentor who can help him with decision making due to experiencing similar circumstances and backgrounds. When talking about decision making and the benefits of having a Black male mentor, Malik's statement that "maybe if I go around it and show them that I'm not the stereotypical Black man" is indicative of how Malik's desires to learn from his mentor how to make decisions that defies negative stereotypes without sacrificing his Black identity.

When further explaining his need and preference for mentorships with other Black men when looking for the right match, Malik stated:

> My biggest thing was seeing somebody who was an educated male. You know, like yourself or something like that. Most of us, kind of from what I've seen, it's kind of hard to imagine yourself in a field dominated mostly by Caucasians or … another ethnicity. And I just feel like seeing that, it helped me to know what I wanted to do…I want you to tell me the truth like it is… If we don't have anybody to look up to or anybody who can tell us the truth or really stay on our asses about it [and say], 'you need to get your degree.' It's really easy for us to go back to – well for me – it's really easy for me to go back home get into some trouble and do whatever and become another statistic

It was important for Malik to see someone navigating within higher education who looked like himself. Malik mentioned that it is hard to imagine himself operating within in a field dominated by Whites without seeing someone else doing it. Likewise, Malik's accounts indicate that he strongly feels that without examples of other Black males to "look up to", along with their presence and encouragement to achieve, he feel that it is much easier for him and other Black males to leave college. As Malik states, "its really easy for us to go back—well for me—its really easy for me to go back home and get into some trouble and do whatever and become another statistic."

Validity of Knowledge Exchanged. Despite some inconsistencies within higher education literature regarding the significance of race and gender matching within mentorships, the participants within the study shared the belief that Black undergraduate males distinctly benefit from the mentorship of Black males (Hollingsworth & Fassinger, 2002; Noe, 1988; Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn & Saddler, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007). As such, the participants argued that non-Black male mentors are not as well equipped to understand the unique experiences of undergraduate Black males from a firsthand perspective. When asked whether Black males at PWIs benefit more from having Black males as their mentors, Lando stated, "I feel like they would feel most comfortable with a person who is most like them." Due to their shared marginalized social experience in American society, Lando argued that Black males naturally have a greater sense of familiarity with other Black males, which increases their level of comfort in shared mentorships.

Other mentors and mentees within the study shared the impression that a unique shared social experience brings more validity and authenticity into the mentorship. The participants shared how a lack of shared experiences makes it hard to relate. For example Malik stated:

> If you're sitting here and you're telling me something and yet you ain't never been through it and you can't relate to me – man, how can I take your word for valid – the validity is almost discredited now. I don't know what to say because it's just nonexistent – not saying I don't like White people or nothing like that.

When considering mentorship experiences with mentors who were not Black, Malik emphatically believed other Black men were more suited to provide him advice and help him navigate throughout society. The mentees as a whole expressed the idea that information and advice from a White or non-Black mentors would not have the same validation.

This was a concept the mentors shared as well when reflecting on their previous mentorships when being a mentee. Lando, who is a doctoral student, conveyed his contrasting thoughts when explaining the differentiation when receiving advice from a Black professor as opposed to receiving advice from a White professor. As Lando expressed:

> If I hear my White professor say, 'Oh yes, oh yes, as soon as you get through with that Ph.D., I tell you what, positions are going to be knocking down the door.'…If I had a Black mentor, I feel like they would be more like, 'Cuz, you better apply to everything you see and you act like you running for president, that's how hard it is to get a job, even if you have this degree because you're Black.'…If I had a mentor telling me that kind of stuff and giving me the real drop on it, I think it would be more beneficial.

Style of communication was an important aspect of the mentorships involving Black males. As previously described, the participants viewed Black mentors as having an ability to be more authentic and more "real". In considering the contrasts between the mentorships of Black male mentees and non-Black male mentors, Lando indicated that a Black male mentor is more prone

to give a real viewpoint of the tribulations that Black males experience. More significantly, Lando believed that a Black mentor is more likely to be both conscious and honest about the hardships faced by Black males.

Likewise, when asked to expound on how undergraduate males are more likely to trust Black male mentors, Author explained that his comfort with other Black males come from a sense of confidence that is rooted in knowing there is a shared history and cultural understanding between the individuals. Meaning, Author believed it is not only important to share a marginalized social experience throughout American history; there is also importance in knowing that the other Black male has a shared cultural understanding. As Author elaborates:

> I am more confident in that I can identify with him and that we have this certain cultural understanding…I know that we share this certain cultural understanding or we share this historical past that we can come together and identify with and begin to move together in a different manner where we might not [always] understand each other, but we do kind of dig each other in a way.

Author's statement suggests that he had more confidence in the support and advice from a Black male mentor because they share a historical past and cultural understanding of the unique experiences of Black males. As he said, "we may not always understand each other, but we do kind of dig each other in a way." In this sense, Author explained that they may not always agree, but their shared historical past and shared cultural understanding makes them appreciate each other more. As such, their shared understanding is able to manifest itself in understanding points-of-views and perspectives that are more difficult for others to understand.

When asked whether he could receive help from or benefit from having a non-Black mentor, Author suggested that it would depend on the person's ability to connect with him and relate to his Black cultural interests. As he states:

> It would depend on who that person was and a lot of my interests are very much so community-based in a sense that my interest are geared toward my African-American people. So, if one of my mentors were of another race, I would say that if their interests weren't along with mine, then it would probably conflict in a way because they wouldn't be able to, not saying they can't tell me nothing, but they don't really have anything to feed me necessarily. Like we're sitting at a table, but you've got something that I don't want to say allergic to, but you got some stuff over here that I'm not really interested in eating. When it comes to African-American males, we have to sit at the table and eat and have the same scraps.

For Author it was important for him that his mentor understood and could teach him something about his culture. He desired to learn more about his culture and did not believe a mentor who did not share the same historical cultural understanding could help fulfill such desires.

When discussing mentors of a different culture or race, Author stated, "they don't really have anything to feed me necessarily." His metaphor depicts being at the table with a White mentor who does not offer anything that he is able to eat or anything that he wants to eat. It suggests that he views knowledge and support from a White or non-Black mentor as not being agreeable with his well-being and does not provide him nourishment—something that can be detrimental rather than helpful. In continuing his metaphor, Author explained that Black males sit at the table and have the same scraps, which suggests that Author believes their shared racialized and marginalized historical experiences create a shared understanding, trust and kinship.

However, the belief that both Black male participants in the mentorship automatically have a shared view of their history and culture is not a given. When discussing how his identity mattered within his mentorship with Malik and how it matters in mentorships involving Black males in general, Leon suggested that "it matters provided that [the] person is conscious that they are Black." This statement suggested that Leon was conscious that an awareness of one's

Blackness is important with regard to whether that factor is important within the mentorship. As Leon further stated:

> I think people put a lot of symbolic value in it, but I think—this is my opinion—I think a lot of damage can be done both to the mentor and the mentee when the mentor is not conscious that [he is] Black and [he has] a mentee who is conscious that [he is] Black …then how is that gonna be helpful? I think if the mentee just wants a Black male mentor, then it's good in that way that they can see someone, but I worry about what ideas, thoughts, and values are being transmitted to the mentee that may already be conscious because of this power dynamic that's substantiating in the relationship. [Are] you just telling them to deny their Blackness?

Leon provided a crucial argument. He described how "people put a lot of symbolic value" in matching Black males with other Black males in mentorships with the assumption that there is always a natural shared belief system or a natural shared connection to one's Blackness within such mentorships. However, Leon argued that it only matters given that both participants are conscious that they are Black. Meaning, the matching of Black males in a mentorship is only important when each person is aware and acknowledges the social realities of being Black. Otherwise, Leon warns that he is concerned about the information exchanged in such mentorships when the mentor is not conscious. He questions whether such mentors will teach their mentees to deny rather than embrace their Blackness. Concepts of Blackness and manhood and the intersectionality of the two was repeated theme throughout the study.

Conceptions of Black Masculinity

As previously referenced in chapter four, Howard and Reynolds (2013) argued that "a limitation with the work on Black males has been a failure to unpack what it means to be Black and male" (p. 233). As the authors described:

> The concept of intersectionality is based on the idea that the typical conceptualizations of discrimination and oppression within society, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and class-based discrimination, do not act independently of one another; instead, these forms

> of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the 'intersection' of multiple forms of exclusion, prejudice, and discrimination (p. 234).

In the case of the Black males in this study, it is important to frame their experiences as Black and male in terms of how these identities interrelate, along with how their various other identities interrelate. Consequently, it is important to frame their experiences through the intersection of these identities as means to highlight their unique experiences and to draw distinct difference from other subpopulations.

Black masculinity and the intersectionality of Blackness and manhood emerged throughout the participants' narratives. Within the context of their mentorships, both the mentors and mentees positioned their conceptions of Blackness and manhood at the forefront of their identities. Likewise, the participants supported the notion that part of the purpose of their mentorships related to their conceptions of Blackness and manhood. The mentees viewed older Black males as providing positive role models. When discussing the importance of surrounding himself with older Black men on campus, Author stated, "I need to be around Black men and see how did they get here, how do they stay here."

In relation to manhood, the mentorship experiences allowed the participants to discuss their notions on and meaning of manhood from a Black perspective. Likewise, the mentorships provided avenues for the participants to discuss their positions regarding Blackness and the significance of their Blackness in the context of PWIs and within society. It was apparent that the participants viewed their mentorships as a means in which to discuss and understand the significance and meaning of being both Black and being a man within the context of both a college campus and within American society.

Blackness. The participants explicitly described their ideas on Blackness and the importance and presence that theirs sense of Blackness played within their mentorships as Black men. The idea on one's Blackness was apparent within the mentorship that Malik experienced with Leon. Malik unapologetically positions his Blackness at the forefront of his identity. He is explicitly proud of his Blackness as a racial identity and identifies most with individuals who share the same explicit pride in their Blackness. This idea played a pivotal role in his mentorship with Leon who was conscious of his own Blackness, but also understood the significance that Malik placed on his Blackness. Likewise, both participants understood their own positionality, as well as the existence and significance of race within their mentorship during its formation. When discussing race and its position within his mentorship with Malik at its outset, Leon mentioned the following:

> Whenever I'm entering a mentoring relationship with a person [who] is also Black, I don't assume a shared experience of Blackness… I got the sense of "Oh, I don't know how Malik feels about me." He may be looking at me like, "Oh, I don't know about this dude." So, I was clear about my own positionality within Blackness.

As Leon explained, he did not assume that Malik shared his same positionality regarding his Blackness. Meaning, Leon did not enter into the mentorship assuming that Malik placed the same significance in his racial identity. Eventually, Leon learned that Blackness was a very important aspect of Malik's personal identity. As such, Leon understood that it was important that he was clear about his own strong positionality of Black consciousness. He soon came to understand further that Malik shared his strong sense of care and understanding of Blackness and its meaning within the context of society.

Leon also understood that his outward appearance did not make it obvious that he positioned his Blackness at the forefront of his identity. In an effort to debunk certain myths and

expectations, Leon proudly and intentionally did not follow stereotypical or popular trends regarding clothing styles and appearances of so-called “typical” Black males. As a doctoral student at Research University, Leon often dressed in business slacks, dress shoes, a button-up collared shirt, a blazer, and a bow tie—an image that does not fit the stereotypical look of Black males as created by media and society.

Their mentorship revealed how many Black males are also prone to have beliefs and expectations of normalized dress attire for Black males. In that regard, some may choose to use one’s outward appearance as a potential indicator of their positionality regarding their Blackness. For example, Malik explained that he was initially hesitant about Leon’s sense of Blackness when they first met because of his outward appearance; however, Malik soon began to understand Leon’s beliefs and positionality regarding this topic. As Malik described:

> Like Leon, when I first seen him I’m like, ‘man I got a cornball.’ but he’s himself and, not only that, he knows where he stands on certain issues. Like I say, where I come from most [of the] time you see pants a little bit bigger, shirts a little bit bigger, hats to the side, and what not. Seeing somebody a little bit more clean cut, or more tighter for lack of a better word, but it do make a difference…I believe our Blackness is there from the get go. Like when I met Leon, I was like “Yeah, you Black, but is you Black? I can see you’re Black, but do you stand up for your people.”

As Malik describes, he initially believed that Leon was potentially a “cornball”. In this context, Malik’s use of the term cornball is to describe someone who is inauthentic and out of touch with his Blackness. He feared that Leon’s dress was an indicator that Leon was someone who rejected his Blackness in an attempt to conform and assimilate into White society. Malik described such individuals as “cornballs” who did not truly understand, appreciate, or share his sense of Blackness.

However, while Leon's initial physical appearance did not fit Malik's idea of Blackness, Malik soon accepted and connected with Leon due to their conversations regarding race and their positionalities about Blackness. Malik learned to appreciate Leon's individuality and conscious decision to defy established and confined notions Blackness as a particular way of dress or style. Instead of seeing Leon's dress as cornball and conforming, Malik saw Leon's behavior as authentically Black and self-empowering.

As such, their mentorship involved very dense conversations concerning racial identity and the idea of Blackness in terms of what it truly means to exhibit one's Black identity. Leon shared with Malik the idea that society often reduces Blackness to narrow, stereotypical ideas that are not all inclusive of a wide range of Black experiences and viewpoints. As Leon describes:

> I think we align the contours of race and class so [that] when we talk about Black people, we talk about poor, Black people and assume that's the experience of all Black folks, but that's not my experience…We work really hard to confine Blackness into this one thing and it has never been this one thing. So, in terms of how I appear in this world, I assert that I am Black and mainstream conceptions of Blackness might be somewhere over here and I'm probably over here.

Leon helped Malik to see that he also carried some narrow conception of Blackness. As such, their conversations allowed Leon to share with Malik a wider and much more complex, inclusive conception of Blackness that Malik appreciated and found refreshing. Malik understood how Leon's appearance and behavior did not detract from his Blackness, instead further empowered his Blackness beyond the confines of mainstream images.

As such, Malik's conversations with Leon encouraged him to further challenge society's narrow views of Blackness. As a result, Malik better recognized and affirmed his opposition to

narrow views of Blackness and now embraced countering such stereotypes. Their mentorship helped Malik find his voice on the matter.

> If that is what you wear, that's you. Be you and you can still be a Black man. Some people be like, "You ain't Black cause you ain't got on big clothes or wearing Jordan's." I'm like, "Do you realize how dumb you sound?"

As Malik described, his mentorship with Leon helped him to see the limitations and fallacies of reducing and trivializing the definition and the authenticity of one's Blackness to an individual's outward appearance. Like the narrow beliefs of Jefferies and Chis classmates who questioned their Black authenticity due to their behavior and intelligence, Malik understood how accepting mainstreams narrow views of Blackness is self-marginalizing. Instead, their conversations involved Blackness as being conscious of both history and contemporary condition with a sense cultural pride.

Likewise, the conversations within the mentorships in the study often included discussions about society's limited images of Black males. The participants' enriched discussions included conceptions of Blackness, but their conversations also included discussions regarding their conceptions of manhood and its meaning as a Black male. These conversations often included an intersectionality of their Blackness and manhood.

Manhood. The study revealed that one of the key components within the mentorships was the conception of manhood. For example, Jefferies described how his experiences in college helped his personal development as a Black man. Jefferies' mother raised him in a single-parent household. When asked to describe his preparedness for his transition into college as a young Black man, Jefferies stated that:

> Being raised in a single-parent household and with that parent [being] a woman, there is only so much she can advise me on as a far as manhood in general…She got me through high school, so it's like, alright, now its college and a point where you learn the most about yourself from 18 to 23, 24. … There are situations you have to handle as a man. So, I feel like I was prepared to an extent, but there was still some stuff I had to learn and had to experience.

As a single mother who raised him alone, Jefferies believed his mom did everything she could do in preparing him before he left home to attend college; however, he expressed how his mother was limited in what she could teach him in regards to manhood. Do to the absence of Jefferies' father in his life, he expressed there was "some stuff" he had to lean and experience on his own in order to better understand and come into manhood. Jefferies was very aware of the impact of his father's absence in developing his sense of manhood.

In terms of fatherhood, Jefferies' uncles were his role models and provided him with guidance and fatherly support during his childhood. As he explains:

> I had uncles [who] would come in and come out of that role. … My mom's oldest brother, since I was little, would always claim [me] like, 'that's my other son.' He always told me that I was his first kid.

Not only did his uncles raise him, but they also claimed him as their additional son, which provided Jefferies with a sense of love, security, and validation. Although his father did not play a prominent role in his life, he did not express anger or bitterness toward his father. As he explains he thoughts on the absence of his father:

> On everyday kind of things, as a kid, I questioned things. Well, 'he has his dad, she has her dad, they have their dad—why don't I?' But for me personally, on a lot of stuff, I kind of internalize things, so I may not upfront directly say so. … I just kind of said like, "Well, he made his decision. It's kind of what it was—there's nothing I can do about it. I can't make him come back. I can't make him think or act a certain way." So, you just kind of accept it. It's one of those things you accept, like you know your family can't do

> certain stuff—you accept that. At first, you question it, like "Why?", but then as you get older, you accept things. … Every now and then, it's kind of one of those things back in your mind, but you, like, move past it. I never thought too much of it, but, I think, the older I got, the more I realized how much it affects me.

As Jefferies describes, he questioned the absence of his father as a child and seem to question the fairness of the situation. Other kids around him had their father and he did not understand why his dad was not in his life. Jefferies later learned to internalize or outwardly accept the absence of his father with the belief that "well, he made his decision." He accepted there was nothing that he could do about the absence of his father. Jefferies' mother and uncles played prominent roles in life. However, as he explains, the absence of his father is evident even though he has attempted to accept the situation. Although he often attempts to avoid thinking about the absence of his father, the effects of his father's absence is more apparent to him as he got older and entered into adulthood.

When considering the effects of his father's absence in his life and its impact on his growth and understanding of manhood, Jefferies explained his perceptions on the importance of college mentorships:

> There have been days where I am transitioning to manhood—you gotta learn to do for yourself for the sake of being a man. And so sometimes there's stuff you can't do—you gotta learn some stuff…You got Black males coming in that don't have that father figure coming into college and, so, a mentor can kind of obtain that space for that duration of time and, eventually, that could be or create a lasting relationship… Once you walk across that stage and you're giving shout outs—shout out to my mom, thank you Jesus, and then my mentors Mr. so and so and Dr. so and so.

Jefferies understood that college is a time of transition. He recognized his own transition with manhood and understood how the absence of his father meant he had to do some things on his own. Likewise, his lack of knowledge in certain areas caused some anxieties and sometimes his

inability to do things. Jefferies stressed that, although his mother did her best to prepare him for college and adulthood, there were still areas of knowledge about manhood that she was unable to provide to him from a firsthand perspective as a woman. For example, there was a lot that Jefferies did not know in relation to how a man should look and behave when he first arrived at Urban University. As Jefferies explains:

> I [didn't] know how a man should act, how a man should dress, how a man should carry himself. … Yeah, you're taught that growing up, but it not fully put into perspective until you get older when it's prominent. Like, ok, you shouldn't sag your pants as a boy well yeah whatever, but as a man it's like you really see why that's important. You shouldn't sag your pants not only like as far as how people perceive you, but that has an effect on like why you didn't get that job…You don't know how to tie a tie, you didn't have a tie—that kind of stuff.

Jefferies response explains how although his mother attempted to teach him common lessons on how to think, act, and carry himself as a man; however, those lessons taught by his mother during childhood did not resonate with him until he entered adulthood in college. As a man in college, Jefferies then understood the importance of those lessons. The absence of his father prevented Jefferies from having a man's perspective on those lessons.

My mentorship with Jefferies was a means to discuss and mutually share knowledge and our perceptions on many topics, including our perceptions of personal growth and manhood. I was aware that Jefferies did not have his father in his life. I was also conscious that Jefferies saw our conversations and interactions as a means to capture some information on manhood and topics involving life in general.

As such, our conversations not only involved discussions involving manhood, but also discussions about career goals and every day topics such as sports and personal relationships with significant others. Jefferies did not frequently have these conversations with another adult

Black male growing up with his mother in a single home. Although his uncles were a support to him prior to college, they were not in close proximity or in frequent contact with him in college. Our mentorship allowed Jefferies to discuss topics with another Black male who was also an adult—an experience that was not previously available to him. As he described:

> The kind of conversations we have on a regular basis, I don't have somebody that I can have that conversation [with] … I can talk to my uncle, but I can't necessarily have that conversation whenever. … I'm not a sports person, but if basketball was on. we can have a conversation about that, and you can explain some stuff that I don't understand, or we can just talk about it. Conversations I can probably have with my mom, but it's not the same having it with a male because you have a female and it's just a different perspective. She used to give me [advice on guy stuff] from a female perspective, but she doesn't know the mindset of a man, from a man standpoint. So, it short changed me a little bit. So stuff like tying a tie, shaving, that kind of stuff you typically learn from your father or dad or whatever. But that stuff I didn't get, so, now, it's like I'm growing up and you're there, so now you're kind of that stand in figure. Now, I feel like I'm making up for lost time. How about facial hair? You can't talk to your mom about facial hair. That's not a conversation you can have with your mom.

Jefferies explains that his childhood shortchanged him from knowing a man's mindset on certain things that "you typically learn from your father or dad". As such, Jefferies viewed our mentorship and my presence in his life as "kind of that stand in figure" for the absence that he experienced.

Although I was conscious that Jefferies saw our conversations and interactions as meaningful experiences, prior to this study I was not entirely aware that he viewed such experiences as opportunities to make up for "lost time" and experiences that he was previously "shortchanged" on by the absence of his father. Jefferies reflections on our shared mentorship revealed how our typical conversations about everyday life, activities, and events, such as sports or shaving, were actually learning experiences and activities in which he listened to my thoughts and observed my behaviors as a means to better understand and develop his own conceptions of

manhood. Although I knew Jefferies enjoyed our interactions and I was aware of the circumstances regarding his father, I took for granted the level of significance that Jefferies placed on these interactions in terms of manhood and making up for “lost time”. However, I was conscious of our shared enjoyment of those experiences. In turn, I better understood the importance that manhood has on the development of Black males during college. Our enjoyment and bi-directional learning experience within the mentorship was both mutual and reciprocal in nature (Jones & Brown, 2011; Young & Perrewé, 2000). Additional mentors in the study expressed how reflecting on their mentorship experiences conjured up thoughts related to the idea of manhood and the influence of older Black males in their life.

The relationship of fatherhood to manhood emerged within the study with other participants as well. Author described the idea of father figures and its relation to mentorships involving undergraduate Black males. He explained that many Black males on campus view Black male faculty, staff, and even graduate students as role models and father figures. Author argued that such role models are especially important to Black males who seek examples of manhood. As he described:

> A lot of them don’t have dads and a lot of them [were] raised by their mothers, or they [were] raised by communities of African-Americans and the woman [were] just kind of doing the best they [could] and not really teaching them how to be a man, a Black man in our society…I didn’t really grow up with my dad my whole life, so having different African-American males present on this campus has helped me get a vision of what it’s like to be a man or African-American man in our society.

Similar to Jefferies, Author also did not have his father prominently in his life viewed his mentorship experiences as a means to learn and interact with adult Black males—an experience that was difficult prior to his college experience. Author’s mentors included Lando, who was a doctoral student at Research University. His mentors also included other Black male faculty in

his department. Author argued that his mentors were examples of how to carry himself as a Black male. As Author indicated, these individuals taught him things about manhood that he was not able to learn from his father who was not present.

Likewise, Malik explained the significance of having Black male mentors as father figures and male role models in his life and in the lives of other Black males on campus. As he describes:

> I would say the development of skills honestly. And not even that, it [also] helps you become harder on yourself…if somebody is telling you, a male figure, is telling you, 'look you need to make this. Its gonna help you as a person.' Because I don't care [what] nobody tell you, you need a father figure in your life. And if he say—a male voice—is saying that you need to get this degree. Then you gonna be like, 'dang, I do need to get this degree.'

Malik's response highlighted the significance and impact he placed on hearing a male's voice in providing him with life advice. Additionally, he mentioned the importance of a male and a father figure in life to provide first-hand advice on what to do from a man's perspective. This suggested that Malik viewed a man's advice to be valid because of a shared set of similar experiences. Malik felt that such interactions with mentors helped shape his ideas of manhood.

Likewise, when talking about his perceptions of manhood and his aspirations for his post-graduate life as an adult, Malik described the life that he envisioned himself living in the future.

> I'm 20-years-old, so of course I like [chasing] women but I'm like sooner or later it's going to get old. I don't want to do that for the rest of my life. I want to go home and live. Well I have a vision for myself. I'm going to tell you my vision. I got the crib. And you know I was talking about going to the military. I got the crib. A nice little four bedroom [house]. No, I'm not going to say four bedroom. A three bedroom, something like that. With the two car garage, with me coming home and my woman there waiting on me. She got her thing. You know working hard, making her money. And then I come home to my kids. As soon as I walk into the door, they [come] running to me. So, I'm like, that's what I want to do. I don't want to say, man it's nice outside—it's a club popping tonight. Sooner or later, that is going to get old. I don't want to hear that. It's like, what's the point. I ain't doing nothing, but wasting money, wasting money and my time.

Malik's vision of his adult life and his concept of manhood involves a man who is present and supports his children as an equal provider with his wife. His concepts contradict the negative mainstream stereotypes of Black males that permeate society. These stereotypes typically portray Black males as womanizing thugs who are absent, bad fathers.

When reflecting upon his own growth as a young man in college, Mr. Scott discussed his experience observing the behaviors of male role models and mentors in his life who provided him with examples of manhood. As Mr. Scott describes:

> [Reflecting] back to my neighbor, Mr. J., I saw how he treated his daughters. I saw how he treated his wife. I saw how he embraced me. And so I wanted to be able to do that because I had no other examples around. I had other men on the block [who] were taking care of their families, but he was just closer and more obvious and more accessible. So, despite not having a father in my life, I saw the benefits of being able to do that in the lives of other young men. So not having that, I wanted to be an example for others. 'Although you may not have had [a father], you can still make some good choices about being a good and productive citizen and man in our community.'

Mr. Scott explained that he learned about manhood through the examples of older, Black men in the community whom he observed. When reflecting on his own life, he understood the important role that his mentors played in providing him with an example of manhood and, ultimately, adulthood. As such, he saw it as his personal responsibility to be a similar role model to younger men. Mr. Scott felt his role was to demonstrate to young, Black men that examples of manhood exist even without the presence of one's father. Mr. Scott felt his earlier experiences with mentors helped shape his idea of manhood.

Gender and Sexuality. In addition to Blackness and manhood, the study provided insight as to how the participants' gender and sexuality can potentially influence mentorships involving Black male mentors and mentees. In terms of gender, Lando explained that he

preferred to keep a social distance when mentoring women mentees due to the possibility that "the woman mentee could mistake certain actions for romantic advances." As such, Lando believed such behavior is less likely to be mistaken for romantic advances when mentoring men.

Likewise, Mr. Scott stated that he explicitly specifies his motives and sexual identity early within mentorships as a means by which to establish safety for himself and the participating mentee. As Mr. Scott further explains:

> It is important in terms of safety—both for me and for her and for him. I'm a heterosexual male and, so, I may mentor a homosexual male or heterosexual female and that's fine. But I need to make sure they understand my own personal boundaries, [meaning] where I'm at and what my orientation is so that, whatever issues and concerns they may have, we put those things up front as a part of the initial mentoring conversation.

Unlike Lando, Mr. Scott's believes there is an equal potential for mistaken advances regardless of whether the mentee is male or female or regardless of their sexual identity. As such, Mr. Scott believed that stating his sexual identity and communicating a clear disinterest in any type of relationship helps to establish boundaries and avoids potential issues. Regarding mentoring males, Mr. Scott's philosophy is to reveal his sexual identity for transparency and to establish personal boundaries regardless of their identity.

In regards sexuality, Lando mentioned that his identity as a heterosexual male is one of the reasons he stands out among other graduate and professional Black men on campus. He credits this distinction, which is views as rare, as to why many undergraduate heterosexual Black males at Research University gravitate to him. As Lando describes:

> People can look up to folks…there's not that many Black men in graduate school and then, of the Black men in graduate school, in a way, I am an anomie from my experience. And I haven't done any character research on this, but, there's folks who have certain affiliations or certain lifestyles like that are uncommon to me, but are very common here.

> … Most Black guys I know here in grad school are either Greek, gay or both. To be a non-Greek; heterosexual male; going to church; [who doesn't] drink, smoke or curse, I feel like there's a bunch of eyes on me.

Lando saw his identity as a Black male who is non-Greek affiliated, heterosexual, church attending, does not drink or smoke, and does not curse as rare individual who was highly visible and sought after by undergraduate Black males at Research University. Likewise, his statements indicate that he views individuals with such an identities, including gay or bi-sexual, as unusual and unfamiliar and, as such, he would be uncomfortable engaging in mentorships with them.

Although none of the participants within the study directly revealed their sexual identity, their conversations during the interviews indicated heterosexual behavior (e.g., references to past or existing relationships or sexual encounters with female companions). Lando and Mr. Scott interviews suggested that that each believed that participating in a mentorship with a mentor or mentee who was of the opposite sex/gender or who was gay or bisexual could potentially change the nature and/or behavior within the mentorship. Likewise, the two mentors expressed belief that mentoring someone of the opposite gender or sexual identity increases the possibility of one of the participants mistaking actions of help as personal advancements. In regards to mentoring men as opposed to woman, Lando explains:

> Not as much, but, sometimes, you still gotta keep your eyeball open [laughing]. I've had it happen one time—one time. It opened my eyes and I was like, I have to keep my eyeballs open just in case. I was helping this guy out, man. He was having a hard time getting home and [I] brought him home one day and he asked did I want to walk him in. And I was like alright, that's cool to just help you get in. And when I walked in, he walked in right behind me and locked the door behind us. I said "No, no, no, no, no." Hero complex! That's part of Black male mentoring. It can go bad. It can go bad.

In Lando's narrative he described how helping one of this male mentees generated feelings in the mentee that Lando described as "hero complex", which generated a physical attraction that was not mutual. Although Lando did not directly state homophobic beliefs, his thoughts suggested that he is not entirely comfortable with the idea of mentoring a gay mentee. As a result, such possibilities required that he establish clear boundaries within the mentorships in which he participates. The importance of sexual identity and the potential impact of one of the participant's opposite sexual identity did not emerge within the study. Each of the study's participants self-identified as heterosexual.

As such, although society oppresses all the Black males in this study in various ways, they all possessed the privilege of heteronormativity. As such, the participants' privilege of heteronormativity sheltered them from the oppressed experience of being a Black man at a PWI and did not provide them with the nuances of participating in a mentorship as a gay Black man with someone of the same or opposite sexual identity. As Howard and Reynolds (2013) argued, "this privilege, accounting for interlocking oppressions, can serve to marginalize homosexual Black men in unintended and largely unexamined ways" (Brown, 2005; Hill Collins; Hutchinson, 1999, p.235). Some of the heteronormative narratives shared by Mr. Scott and Lando supports Howard and Reynolds (2013) arguments.

Cultural Borderland

Code-switching. The study revealed the challenges the participants' experienced navigating White dominated spaces on a daily basis. Some of the participants brought up the common phrase and concept of code-switching, which they self-described during their interviews as a common practice of Black students at their respective PWIs. When asked to define code-switching, James described:

> Code-switching is when you have to play a role that is not usually found in your own culture. Code-switching for me would be going from listening to hip-hop music down the hallway in my headphones to taking off my headphones, approaching somebody, shaking their hand, and saying, "Hey, how you doing? Nice to meet you. My name is so and so," in the proper manner.

James response suggests that he defined code-switching as occurrences when people feel compelled to change who they are, instead of risking being unaccepted by society. His definition of code-switching involves a performance that he practices for the benefit others outside of his culture. Although he acknowledges that his switch behavior and style of speech is inauthentic and does not represent his true self, James did not indicate any trouble or problem with perceived need to conduct the charade for the benefit of his White peers or faculty.

Young (2009) places code-switching within the broad context of W.E.B. DuBois theory of double consciousness that the renowned sociologist introduced in *Souls of Black Folks* (1903). Written during the peak of racial segregation in the United Stated, DuBois (1903) described the problem of double consciousness as similar to racial split personality or racial self-consciousness caused by the psychological effects of having to "always look at one's self through the eyes of others (p. 2)." In essence, the act of code-switching in this context what the act of James succumbing, or pretending to succumb, to mainstream or White values and cultural norms through the lens of their consciousness, while suppressing his own cultural identity through turning off his hip-hop music and changing his way of speech.

It is apparent how James did not understand this notion after talking with Mr. Scott who was James mentor. When discussing the idea of code-switching as a practice and behavior of some Black men, Mr. Scott described code-switching as a tactic that is a necessary tool for all Black men to learn and understand.

> Code-switching, for me, is about understanding the environment where you're going, speaking the language, dressing the part so that you assimilate or acculturate to that given environment. As an African-American man, I have to do that in multiple places… I think this code-switching is really about a set of middle-class values that we have put upon us in America… I think if someone just refuses to code-switch, they understand that and they understand the ramifications, which is perfectly fine, but understand that there [are] some things that are going to be much more difficult for you to achieve because you are way out against the system. It's not that it can't happen, but you're gonna have to make your own way.

Mr. Scott's acknowledged that there is an element of code-switching that includes involves cultural assimilation. Within this context he associates code-switching to adapting to a set of middle-class values that are, in fact, White cultural, middle-class values.

Although, Mr. Scott acknowledged that Black men may choose not to participate in such performances, he argued that it is much more difficult for such individuals to achieve success in America. In that regard, the act of code-switching unfairly puts the responsibility of cultural understanding relatability on the oppressed, instead of the oppressors in order to thrive. As such, Black males who are conscious of that reality may choose to accept or reject such practices.

However, Mr. Scott in difference to this concept viewed code-switching as a means to achieve desired outcomes. This is what Mr. Scott attempted to communicate to James during their mentorship. Mr. Scott explained his use of code-switching as a necessary process for navigating through this racialized society. As describes:

> I think now, being a more mature man, the navigation is really exactly what it is. I understand how to get in and get out and when I go in I'm going in as me, not relinquishing my values of who I am as a person, as an individual, but understanding that there may be some areas and some opportunities that I need to go in and get what I need and come back out and that's cool—I ain't gonna be in there long. I think you have [to] know who you are as a person and you keep learning who you are over time and you become more, or less, comfortable with navigating that process.

Mr. Scott description of code-switching conjures up images of covertly going into foreign territory with intentionality and without sacrifice of his identity. He mentioned getting in and out of White spaces without relinquishing his values. His purpose is to get what he needs and come back. However, he acknowledged that it takes maturity and understanding of oneself in order to be comfortable navigating the process.

Mr. Scott uses the term code-switching to metaphorically describe going in and out of White spaces to get what he wants. Although he acknowledges that he practices code-switching he states that "I'm going in as me, not relinquishing my values of who I am as a person, as an individual, but understanding that there may be some areas and some opportunities." In this context, although Mr. Scott argues that he is not relinquishing his values and his identity, he does argue that it is necessary to wear the mask in order to acquire some opportunities in Whites spaces that he needs to go in and get. As such, this practice further strengthens and perpetuates White behavior and White spaces as the norm and the ultimate source of power and opportunity.

Mr. Scott instructed and taught James that it is necessary to navigate in White spaces by using code-switching as a means to acquire opportunity. Furthermore, he added that "I need to go in and get what I need and come back out and that's cool—I aint gonn be in there long", This suggests that he believes that code-switching in Whites spaces is not harmful to his consciousness because he does this in short periods of time. Likewise, he argues that "you have to know who you are as a person and keep learning who you are over time and you become more, or less, comfortable navigating that process. This suggest that he acknowledges that code-switching involves some level of self-induced identity conflict or inauthenticity that he has learned to manage through time as an adult.

As such, Mr. Scott's mentoring lessons of navigating in White spaces through code-switching reinforced the idea of Whiteness as the norm. DuBois' (1993) theory of double consciousness describes the Black experience in America as viewing the world through the lens of both Blackness and the dominant culture of Whiteness. Unfortunately, Mr. Scott did not inform James of the psychological damage of double consciousness and the reinforced dominance of Whiteness that code-switching causes when operating in White spaces.

For example, James states "code-switching is when you have to play a role that is not usually found in your own culture." His response indicates that code-switching reinforces in his mind the false, negative belief that his own culture and his own Blackness is inferior to Whiteness. He further described walking down the hallway listening to Hip Hop music in his headphones, but being compelled to turn off his music when being a approached by a White person. He also changed his normal way of speech as a way of normalizing himself in Whiteness. As such, James was taught successfully navigate in White spaces by neutralizing his Blackness.

The idea of going in and out of White spaces is a metaphoric idea that Anzaldua (1987) described as crossing a cultural borderland. In both cases, the concept is actions that involve crossing a cultural borderland between the dominant White culture and your own. Anzaldua's idea described this thought process with the use of a metaphoric borderland. She described a concept in which a duality exists between the oppressor and oppressed. However in contrast to the idea and behavior of code-switching, Anzaldua's metaphoric borderland is the idea of the oppressed proudly defying and refuting the dominant culture's views and beliefs. This metaphorical concept of borderland crossing supports the CRT tenet that views Whiteness as a

property (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) that is not transferable or transactional to people of color. In this particular, people of color are merely guests invited to enter the property of Whiteness.

Moreover, Molinsky (2007) introduced the concept of cross-cultural code-switching which the researcher defined as the "act of purposefully modifying one's behavior in an interaction in a foreign setting in order to accommodate different cultural norms for appropriate behavior (p. 624)." The study provided an account of the three challenging psychological states that people face in successfully adapting their behavior in foreign cultural interactions that includes experienced performance difficulty; experienced face threat; and experienced identity conflict. The author describes experienced performance difficulty as "the extent to which an individual experiences the task of producing a cross-cultural code-switch as a challenge to his or her cultural knowledge and skill (Molinsky, p 627)." Likewise experienced face threat and identity conflict involves the embarrassment and personal conflict of the action when the behavior is not in accordance with his or her core system of values. In the case of the participants in the study, their narratives revealed that the participants understood the unfair pressure to use code-switching in White spaces, and some shared their beliefs that code-switching and other similar behaviors encourages the abandonment of their identities in favor of mainstream social norms.

That's that College Shit: Stepping into Whiteness. When talking about the advice that he received from family about going off to college, Malik stated, "they (family) always telling me don't forget where you come from, especially if I was to ever make it big or something like that." Malik's family did not want him to forget his family values and his sense of Blackness as he pursued his college career. Likewise, the men in the study described daily situations in which circumstances at their PWI forced them to negotiate the intersections of two or more cultures.

For example, the men in the study mentioned several examples in which the social norms and values around them at their PWI did not align with their own cultural values. Moreover, the men experienced internal conflict and internal fear of rejecting their own culture in favor of attempting to gain favor and acceptance in their collegiate culture.

Leon described this negotiated nuance when stating, “I love the analogy of the borderland because I feel like I exist right here in a Black and White world, between academic and non-academic spaces—there are multiple borderlands that I’m intersecting and I constantly wrestle with it.” Leon explained the challenges that exist as a Black man who must negotiate or adapt to situations in a culturally White dominated society, while maintaining his own cultural identity.

> The deeper I venture into White territory and into the White world geographically, the further I am from my community. And I think that's an actual reality…Black folks, we will get just close enough to White culture, and there are significant barriers that prevent us from even accessing further into White culture. Economics play a huge part in what we see in White worlds, so it's not that Black folks aren't able to traverse that or aren't interested in traversing that terrain; a physical barrier is set up. I think what happened [was] when I [went] to college, it allowed me to traverse … these borders and I … got pretty deep in the White world and White culture, but I am completely separated [from my culture]. My family can't see me. These mountains have blocked where I'm at, and they literally can't understand the world that I'm operating in and engaging in and there is a pull. So either I can go over here and try to bring some folks back and help them understand what's happening here, or I can try to bring my folks along. But there are limits to that… If you want to maintain and exist in both of those spaces, you have to live in the borderland. You can't decide not to be here because you’ll lose this [opportunity] and, if you come back here, you’re definitely losing that [opportunity], too. So, the only space for conscious Black folks to exist is in the borderlands and that is hard and you're limited. You're limited on how far you can go economically. You're limited on how [many] deeper relationships you can build and how many folks you can help traverse these barriers because there are significant resources in this White space.

Leon’s description puts the concept of a cultural borderland crossing into proper perspective. He explained the duality that exists between Black and White cultures that acts as a physical barrier—a barrier created by racism and socioeconomic inequalities. Leon explained that the

college experience, specifically in reference to attending a PWI, moves Black males closer to the White culture, which separates them from their family and their familiar culture. As he does not want to leave or undervalue his culture, he must operate within the borderlands in order to function within the environment. As a result, in order to maintain his connection to his cultural identity, he must cross back and forth between the metaphorically Black and White cultural borderlands. This crossing means operating within one border that may have separate rules, norms, and expectations and then crossing back across one's own border. As a Black male at a PWI, this concept metaphorically means operating on a foreign land with a work or student visa, but without the option of obtaining permanent residence status or citizenship.

When crossing the border, there is pressure to fit-in and operate within social norms that of the majority or dominant culture, but there is also pressure at home to remain authentic and not succumb to believing one's own culture is inferior or less desirable. Malik described the pressure from his uncles who often questioned him and reminded him to resist owning a cultural ideology that was foreign to his own. As Malik explains:

> I take heat for being the college student. They encourage me, but, yet, they still like down you. Because, if I don't see something their way, they like, "Oh, that's that college shit." I'm like, "No, it's that Malik shit." I don't want to do that. … It ain't like, "Oh, you in college, hahaha." It's just like, sometimes, we may not see stuff the same and they would be like, "That's that college stuff," but I'm like, "What are you talking about? No, I just don't agree with that personally." But then they will be like stay in school, like it's important, you really need that, you don't want to be like me. My uncle always tell me—like that's one of the reasons I'm in school—My uncle says, "You don't want to be like me. You don't want to have to struggle looking for a job." And I'm like, "Yeah, you're right." I'm like, "Uncle, all I have to do is make the right decisions." ... That's that college shit. So, yea, you take heat for being a Black male in college sometimes, especially if you're not doing stuff the way your family wants [you] to.

Malik believed his uncles' saw his varying viewpoints as by-products of his exposure to the White culturally dominated college experience. Although his uncles wanted him to succeed in

college and they understood that it was in his best interests, they did not want him to change or relinquish his own cultural values by mimicking the cultural values exposed to him at Urban University. As he further explained, "My family is a little bit hood or whatever you want to call it… They see me going to college, they encourage me, but like I told you before, they always say make sure you keep your Blackness." Meaning, Malik's family did not want to see him forget or abandon his identity.

In relation to cultural borderland crossing in the mentorships of undergraduate Black males, Leon emphatically thought this negotiation was an important aspect in terms of the exchange of knowledge. He argued that the mentor plays a pivotal role in helping his mentee understand the nuances of the metaphoric borderland. Specifically, he explained that a mentor must help his mentee understand how to navigate the process, without believing that he must abandon his own culture and succumb to mimicking White culture. When placing himself in the position of the mentee, Leon attested:

> I don't want a Black person putting on White face trying to have me mimic what White folks do in the space and push down my own culture, my experience, and who I am and say, "Well, you know, in order for you to be successful, you gotta shuck and jive." Nah, man, we don't need that. … I want somebody [who] is conscious as a mentor and that doesn't always happen.

Leon use of the phrase "shuck and jive" related to his belief that some individuals who mentor Black males mistakenly make their mentees believe that they must "push down" who they are or "push down" their own culture as a means to be acceptable to the mainstream and, ultimately, achieve success in White spaces. He argues that a Black male requires someone who is conscious, referring to their level of understand of the true nature of Blackness as relates to Black American history of experienced racism, marginalization, and oppression. His philosophy

rejects the notion of assimilation as a means of acceptance or of achieving success. He proclaimed, “We don’t need that,” meaning Black males do not need individuals in their lives who teach them to look at their own culture as inferior and who coach them to seek acceptance from the mainstream by appealing to White cultural norms and values. However, Leon did acknowledge that certain behaviors, such as adherences to particular professional dress codes, are necessary to follow in order to be successful in certain cases. Leon described how he engaged Malik about this topic. As Leon described:

> So one of the practical things [that] we talked about is dress and he and I struggle even talking about this now. … I read an article not too long ago about how the way you dress—business professional people dress in a lot of ways—perpetuates different forms of discrimination in terms of gender, race, and religious culture. So how we conceive of professional dress, marginalizes and normalizes different forms of appearances in the work place. So it was hard to be like, “Yeah, button ups, ties, suits. Yeah, you can do that” and I was very careful. I'm like, “If you want to move in this direction, that's fine. Fashion is your way of expressing yourself. You’ve got the freedom to try on a different style. Go for it, but I didn't want him to have the belief that if he didn't subscribe to certain forms of dress then he couldn't be successful. And the conversation was along the lines of, “Okay, what space do you want to be in?” Understand the dress code in those spaces. … You can't work for Goldman Sachs and show up in old school tall tee, throw-back jersey and a fitted cap. That's just not gonna work for that culture. And, of course, there are racist, sexist, homophobic, religious discriminating tones in that dress, but that's the culture that exists. So, we can talk about ways of subverting that culture, but until a revolution happens, you ain't getting a job unless you subscribe to that space. For me, I wanted to make sure he understood that you don't have to throw away your old style – it's about place and space.

Leon attempted to balance the message that he provided Maliki in terms of Malik’s need to maintain his personal identity, while still understanding the real constraints that exist if he wants to operate in certain spaces. Leon acknowledged that the conversation was a struggle due to the challenge of actually understanding how to balance such a feat. This struggle was especially true of an individual who was conscious of maintaining his Blackness, but simultaneously wanted to obtain success in a culture that did not value all of the elements of Black expression.

“This Ain’t Me”: Leveraging of Cultural Identity. The men in the study described examples in which they negotiated the process of the metaphoric borderland. Their thinking processes made them question their actions. According to Jefferies:

> When you’re used to being around certain cultures and it switches, you’re like, “Whoa, how should I act? How should I act toward White people? Should I not say this? Should I annunciate things or should I lower my voice, put a smile on my face?” That kind of thing.

The participants understood that their cultural norms and values did not fit into the mainstream or the cultural norms and values of their White peers and the professionals at their PWI. However, they also described a reluctance to relinquish their identity as a means to garner acceptance. As Malik described:

> Sometimes it just, it just feels like to build that bridge to, I'll say not diverse, but sometimes you have to change yourself to be in an institution and I'm not the one that's gonna do it. I'm gonna be me so, if I don't feel comfortable somewhere, I'm not gonna try to change myself because I feel like that's inappropriate and I'm not.

Malik who is very conscious of his Blackness described seeing other Black males change their behaviors and demeanors when talking with their White peers on campus—a behavior of code-switching. Malik saw such behaviors as inauthentic and a betrayal of one’s cultural identity. Although he understood why some saw the necessity in such performances, he refused to participate in such behavior. In fact, Malik explicitly sought opportunities to communicate that he would not change his behavior or identity.

> What I notice is that, when I do see some Black people talking to some White people, their whole demeanor changes. Like, when I talk to [a] White person, like I’m letting them know—I’m still me. Like yesterday, I walked out of class and a guy named Sam, said, "How you doing, Malik" (in a higher, inauthentic voice) and I’m like, “What's up, man? How you doing (in a deeper, authentic voice)?” I'm not gonna be like, “Hi, how are you (said with a higher, inauthentic voice)?” But when I see some other Black people

> [my] whole demeanor changes. I'm looking like, "Oh, is that how you talk for real because you don't talk to me like that? I could switch from "What's up?" (in a deeper, authentic voice) to "Hi. How are you doing? My name is Malik and I'm a history major at IUPUI." (in a higher, inauthentic voice) But I say it with more pep than that—you know, give a firm handshake and say, "Well, I plan on doing this with my degree and I'm also pursuing this so that I can" (in a higher, inauthentic voice) … So, at the same time, in the back of my mind, I'm like, "Why am I talking like this? This ain't me."

Malik's narrative describe how he see some Black males code-switch and change their demeanor and voice when speaking to their White peers as a way to seem less threatening or more acceptable. Malik saw this as being inauthentic and a betrayal of his Blackness. He believed it was important that he did not portray himself in a submissive manner who was eager or desperate to gain acceptance. He did not want to emasculate himself by talking with a softer, less masculine voice as a means by which to appear less threatening or acceptable. Such nuances were challenges that the men in the study wrestled with on a daily bases. According to the participants, their mentorships were places in which they were able to discuss these complex nuances. Although their philosophies differed (e.g., Mr. Scott, Leon, and Malik), they shared the belief of maintaining their identities in culturally dominated White spaces and properties, such as PWIs.

Chapter Summary

This study organized the participants' narratives under five content categories or themes: how we define our mentorships, the campus is not made for us, been there before, our conceptions of Blackness and manhood, and the practice of crossing cultural borderlands. There were subthemes that accompanied each of the five larger themes that further depicted the experiences of the participants within the study. Within each theme, the men in the study shared

how their race and gender influenced their mentorships as well as their daily interactions with their peers and the faculty/staff at their institutions.

The findings of this study highlighted the complexities and nuances that exist within mentorships and explained how such mentorships function at PWIs. As such, this chapter has identified how predominately White campuses have not always been welcoming for the men in this study. Within their shared space in a hostile environment, both the mentors and mentees saw the mentorships as mutually beneficial experiences. The mentorships provided a space for the participants to discuss topics and share ideas that involved race and racism, manhood, and personal growth.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications for Practice

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore college mentorships involving undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentors at predominately-White institutions (PWIs). Research indicate that these mentorships at PWIs help Black men counteract feelings of isolation and hostility, as well as counteract society's negative perceptions/attitudes of Black males (Bridges, 2011; Robertson & Mason, 2008). The research suggested Blacks men who attend PWIs participate in mentoring experiences that influences their social experience and academic performance (Sutton, 2006; Strayhorn, 2008; Strayhorn & Terrel, 207). This chapter reviews the research questions and further discusses the five themes that emerged from the participants' narratives, provides implications for practice, and proposes recommendations for further research into the topic of college mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentors at predominately-White institutions (PWIs).

Consequently, as a means to better understand the dynamics of their shared experiences this study sought to explore the mentoring experiences of Black men at PWIs from the perspective of both the mentor and mentee. Additionally, the study sought to understand how mentorships involving Black male mentees and mentors address institutional racism and campus hostility. As such, the study considered whether the existence and experiences within such mentorships further oppress and marginalize them, or whether such mentorships contribute to their emancipation and empowerment. Finally, the study also sought to better under how race and gender influences the mentorship.

The study's overarching research question asked, what are the mentoring experiences of undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentors at PWIs? The study revealed

that the participants in the study described their mentorship experiences as beneficial to both participants in the mentorship. Likewise, the participants all described that they sought and experienced positive, beneficial experiences within mentorships.

Additional support reach questions in the study included, how do the participants define the nature of their mentorships; how do the participants perceive the images of Black males at their respective institution; how do the participants perceive the role of personal characteristics and identities, such as race (e.g., Blackness) and gender (e.g., manhood), within the mentorship; how do the participants perceive the knowledge exchanged within the mentorship; and how do the participants perceive the function of the mentorship within the context of predominately-White institution (PWI)? These questions guided the study's purpose and intent as means to captures the men's experiences. Additionally, the emerged themes in the study provided answers to the support research questions.

The five themes that emerged included: 1) how we define mentoring; 2) the campus is not made for us; 3) I been there before; 4) our conceptions of Blackness and manhood; and 5) cultural borderlands. Each theme underscored their shared experiences and perceptions at their respective PWIs. Additionally, subthemes accompanied each of the five larger themes, which further represented the experiences of the participants within this study. These five themes highlighted the intricacies and distinctions that exist within the mentorships and helped to understand how mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and mentors function at PWIs.

In addition to the imbedded five themes that emerged within the study, four tenets of critical race theory (CRT) emerged within the five themes that included: 1) racism is ordinary; 2) Whiteness is property; 3) the concept of interest-convergence, and 4) the concept of

intersectionality. In regards to racism is ordinary, the participants' narratives revealed frequent encounters and experiences of hostility on campus. Specifically, the men experiences included racial stereotyping and microaggressions both inside and outside of the classroom that supported the idea and perception that PWIs are culturally dominated spaces of Whiteness that "are not made for us." Examples of the microaggessions included Chris and Jefferies hearing their White classmates tell them that they are not like other Black males or they were different from what they expected.

Furthermore, the idea of Whiteness is property emerged through the idea of cultural borderland crossing. In regards to this metaphor, the participants described the idea of going in and out of White dominated and owned spaces. Anzaldua (1987) first introduced this metaphorical concept. The author described the concept as going in and out of White occupied spaces as crossing a cultural borderland. In regards to the participants, they described crossing the border as stepping on the campus itself or entering into conversations with dominated White cultural overtones. Examples included going into the classroom where the curriculum reflected White culture and was absent of Blackness. This also included examples from the participants that included going into student support areas and feeling pacified and misunderstood. Jefferies described feeling ignored and treated with content when going to the office of financial aid to ask questions. These experiences made Jefferies as well as the other participants feel isolated in a space of hostility.

When exploring the undergraduate men's decision to attend their respective institutions, the study revealed that three of the undergraduate participants made their college choice based on affordability that was based on their need to stay in-state to acquire a state scholarship. Although research indicates that Black students are likely to be more successful at HBCUs due to

environmental and support factors (Freeman & Thomas, 2002; Palmer & Wood, 2012; Robert, Davis, & Dina, 2010), the state's scholarship limited their opportunities. As a result, they chose to attend one of the in-state PWIs for cost and affordability purposes.

This is an example of Bell's (1980) concept of interest-convergence. Bell (1980) argued that changes in law and policy are not the result of a moral break through, rather Bell argued that society only accommodates the interests of Black Americans when such interests converges with the interest of Whites. In this particular example, the policy limited the opportunity of the Black male participants in this study who did not have the opportunity to choose an institution of their choice. Rather, the state designed the scholarship to reward and assist the in-state institutions that did not include a single HBCU.

Crenshaw's (1989) work on Black feminism introduced the concept of intersectionality. Although Black males carry the status of being a male, which is a privilege in American society for White males, intersectionality explains how the intersection of race and gender does not allow Black males to own the same privileges in society as White males due to historical oppression and inequities (Cooper, 2005; Harper, 2004). Likewise, Howard and Reynolds (2013) argued, "A limitation with the work on Black males has been a failure to unpack what it means to be Black and male" (p. 233). In this study both the mentee and mentors described how their mentorships helped both express and share concepts of Blackness and manhood. This emerged through conversations that involved unpacking the idea of authentic Blackness and the roles and expectations of Black men in society.

Additionally, the mentees shared the perceptions of the importance of hearing advice from their mentors who presented themselves as authentic and made themselves available, listened to their thoughts and concerns, and challenged them to succeed and do better. The

mentees expressed faith and validation form the advice and knowledge of their mentors because it emerged from an individual who shared a similar cultural background.

Likewise, the mentors expressed a personal obligation and commitment to their mentees. The mentors aspired to share lessons and experiences with their mentees to help them succeed and develop as Black men in society. They also felt uniquely obligated and qualified to help their mentee as older Black men who “had been there before.” In doing so, the mentorships were spaces that existed at PWIs where both the mentors’ and mentees sense’ of Blackness and manhood were supported and affirmed by one another.

The use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework allowed for a critical examination of the mentorships in the context of their shared environment. Likewise, this approach allowed the participants narratives to refute dominant ideology that perpetuates negative stereotypes and the marginalization of Black men in American society and within the academy. Moreover, the use of CRT as a framework exposed White privilege and validated the experiences of the study’s participants (Yosso, 2005). Within this study, CRTs theoretical perspective and counter-narrative methodology helped to understand the marginalization of Black men in this study (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). As a result, this research perspective guided the study and illuminated the themes that emerged from the participants narratives that included: 1) our definition of mentoring; 2) the campus is not made for us; 3) I been there before; 4) our conceptions of Blackness and manhood; and 5) cultural borderlands. In addition to the imbedded five themes that emerged within the study, four tenets of critical race theory (CRT) distinctively emerged within the five themes that included: 1) racism is ordinary; 2) Whiteness is property; 3) the concept of interest-convergence, and 4) the concept of intersectionality. These four tenets helped to analyze and conceptualize the narratives of the participants in the study.

Implications for Practice

The findings in this study suggests implications for policy makers and implications for student affairs personnel interested in the mentorship experiences of undergraduate Black men. Specifically, the study's finding suggest recommendations for faculty and administrators at predominately-White institutions who desire to provide supportive and inclusive environments for Black men on their respective campuses. Collectively, these recommendations focus on areas of support that address the needs of Black men at PWIs without placing the burden on their shoulders. Although the findings of the study indicate that mentorships involving Black male mentees and mentors positively support and affirm their sense of Blackness and manhood. Their mentorships existed on campuses that were White dominated spaces that brewed racism and feelings of hostility. Although the mentorships are positive experiences for both participants within these environments, there is still a need and a responsibility of the institutions to address the PWI environments.

Inclusive College Choice. The study's findings indicated that the participants largely chose to attend in-state predominately-White institutions due to state regulated financial aid stipulations and the lack of an in-state HBCU. As a result, state policy makers should review policies for state appropriated scholarships to eliminate racially and culturally restrictive policies. Specifically, in-state students should have access to a variety of options to utilize their state appropriate awards that includes out-of-state institutional types that do not exist within the state, but whose outcomes support students' needs more affectively according to research (Davis, 1994; Palmer & Wood, 2012).

In the case of the student participants, Arthur, Malik, and Chris desired to attend an HBCU. However, state policy limited the utilization of their state awarded scholarship to only in-

state institutions. Unfortunately, there was not an HBCU within their home state. As a result, they were unable to utilize their state appropriated scholarships if they decided to enroll at any existing HBCU. Essentially, their options included a variety institutional types that comprised public, private, and proprietary institutions. However, there was not a single HBCU option that allowed them to use the scholarship, which was critical in their ability to afford college.

In this particular case, exceptions should exists to provide opportunities for students to utilize the state appropriated awards to out-of-state institutions whose institutional types are non-existent within the state. This is especially true for HBCUS given the research that indicates that Black students' college experiences and outcomes are much more positive at such institutions (Davis, 1994; Palmer & Wood, 2012). The lack of such options is racially and culturally restrictive and does not address the best interest of Black students who desire to attend an HBCU.

Review of Institutional Structures. The participants in the study indicated institutional barriers that negatively affected their campus experience. Beyond supporting interventions initiatives, such as mentorship experiences, PWIs that are serious about the experiences of Black men on campus should analyze existing structures, policies, programs, services, and procedures to eliminate factors that marginalize, exclude, and alienate Black men on campus. The analysis should include recruitment, admission, and persistence efforts that directly or indirectly affect Black men on campus.

Likewise, PWIs should review the hiring practice of Black faculty and staff as well as a review of faculty tenure requirement to eliminate factors that exclude and alienate professional Black men on campus. PWIs often implement programs, services, and policies without consideration of the unique needs and experiences of Black men. As such, PWIs need to consider

intentional efforts to include the voices of student and professional Black men when constructing structures, policies, programs, services, and procedures that address the unique needs of Black men and ensure the elimination of factors that marginalize, exclude, and alienate them on campus.

Cultural competency training. The student participants in the study described experiences of hostility and racial microaggressions from peers and university officials. As such, cultural competency of administrative staff and faculty should be a fundamental element of the hiring process and continued professional development of faculty and staff at PWIs. Additionally, the cultural competency of all students should also be a campus priority. Moreover, institutions should not solely rely on specific student affairs and cultural diversity units to provide cultural competency to students through voluntary co-curricular events and activities. Rather, PWIs should prioritize intentional cultural competency training within all units, schools, and programs that include student affairs, academic affairs, and all auxiliary units within the institution.

Likewise, the participants' narratives mentioned the lack of cultural relevant curriculum at their PWI. This indicates that PWIs should review all academic programs within the institution to ensure the cultural competency of the curriculum and pedagogy. The lack of inclusive elements of Black culture and the culture of other underrepresented people of color is racist and further perpetuates feelings of isolation, invisibility, and the marginalization of students of color.

As indicated in this study, it is evident when there is a genuine lack of priority given to the continued development of cultural competency across the institution. PWIs that are serious about the success of Black men, as well as other marginalized groups, should address areas of institutional racism and the lack of cultural competency on various levels of the institution. The

lack of cultural competency perpetuates stereotypical assumptions and campus hostility often experienced by Black men on campus.

Black Male Mentoring Initiatives. Although this study indicates that predominately-White institutions should not expect mentorships involving Black male mentees to eliminate experiences racism and hostility, the study does indicate that for those participants who desire, mentorships involving undergraduate Black men as mentors and mentees can have mutual success outcomes for both participants. These mentorships resulted in both psychosocial as well as academic and career support from a unique and shared gender and racial perspective. As such, PWIs that are serious about the experiences of student and professional Black men on campus should intentionally develop and support both formal and informal opportunities for such mentorships to exist.

For a Black male mentoring initiative to be successful, it has to have institutional support. The initiative requires appropriate budgeting support as well as the support from upper-level administration that clearly communicates the institutions commitment to the effort. Likewise, the institution should remove barriers that impair faculty and staff from participating in mentorships.

As this study indicates, the mentorships consisted of acts of care that included listening, availability, challenge, and authenticity. As such, the structure of mentorships initiatives that involve Black male mentors and mentees should include transparent expectations that involve these acts of care. Likewise, the participants shared experiences of racism and campus hostilities. It is imperative that such mentorship initiatives provide opportunities and spaces for both participants to share knowledge and experiences of racism and marginalization.

Consequently, the study indicated that both participants benefited from the mentorships when there was shared perspective of similar experiences related to the Black male experience. It is vital to find mentors for such initiatives who are racially conscious and who are equipped to support the Black men in the study. Simultaneously, the mentors must be equipped to support the mentees in the mentorships as being both Black and as being men. Meaning, the mentorships should address the intersectionality of the men's racial and gender identities, as well as address and recognize their various other identities so as to recognize their holistic self.

Finally, the purpose and structure of the mentorships involving Black male mentors and mentees should have the capabilities of including conversations that involve the complex nuance of operating in White dominated spaces while maintaining one's own Black cultural identity. As the study indicated, both the mentors and mentees discussed the idea of culture borderland crossing that manifested itself through potentially harmful practices that included code-switching. Consequently, such mentorships should include support that provides knowledge and space to discuss and address these challenges in a safe and mutually supportive environment.

Considerations and Further Research

The findings of this study focus on the college mentorships that involve undergraduate Black male mentees and their Black male mentors at predominately-White institutions (PWIs). The study only represents the college experiences of the five mentees and three mentors who participated in the research study at two PWIs in the Midwest. The sample size for this study was small compared to the number of Black male undergraduates and professionals who participate in mentorships at PWIs across the nation. Future research about such mentorships at PWIs should consider multi-institutional analysis with narratives that include disaggregated sub-populations.

Specifically, the student-participants did not include narratives of mentees who reflected diversity such as out-of-state students, student-athletes, GLBTQ, and student who vary in religious and faith identities. Likewise, the mentor-participants did not include narratives of mentors who reflect diversity such as full-time faculty, peer mentors, GLBTQ, and professionals who vary in religious and faith identities. A larger sample size that included various areas of diversity within the mentee and mentor participants may produce additional information regarding collective experiences of Black men at PWIs.

Additionally, there is a need to consider whether PWIs use mentorships as smokescreens and unfairly place the burden on Black males to overcome the environmental obstacles that PWIs present, rather than address the racial and systemic problems that exist within the institution. As a result, more research should examine the intent and desired outcomes of such mentorships initiatives at various institutions to measure the amount resources and effort applied to these initiatives in comparison to efforts to address the campus climate, institutional racism, and other barriers that impede the success of Black men on campus. This is still largely unexplored in higher education.

Where Are They Now

Mr. Scott (Mentor). Mr. Scott remains an administrator at Urban University, but he is now also a doctoral program. He remain personally committed to being a Black male role model to young Black men on campus. Mr. Scott still practices a traditional top-down mentorship approach that he describes as mentoring with "specific, measurable goals and clearly defined personal boundaries" between the mentor and mentee. As mentioned, Mr. Scott still maintains contact with James and takes pride in seeing him graduate.

Lando (Mentor). At the time of the interviews, Lando was a doctoral student at Research University (RU). His previous student and professional involvement in higher education consisted of experiences mainly at HBCUs. Landon briefly took a campus housing position at his alma mater, but returned to Research University as campus administrator with an academic support program that supports pre-college students. His involvement with one of Research University's pre-college summer programs resulted in his informal mentorship of Author, but it was also the reason for his return to Research University.

Although Lando still maintains contact with Chris, he is able to maintain a closer relationship with Author due to their proximity. Although Lando deeply contested the racial climate of Research University and emphatically proclaimed that the institution did not care for wealth fare of Black people and was not supportive environment for Black males, Lando indicated that he is committed to helping Black students at Research University in the same manner that his helped Chris and Author. Lando's feelings that RU did not value or care for Black people was his motivation for mentoring.

Leon (Mentor). Leon who was also a doctoral student at the time of the study, now works for non-profit organization in the Midwest. Leon's previous involvement in higher education included student and professional experiences at private and public PWIs. The study highlighted his desire and enjoyment to contribute to Malik's development. Malik's growth and appreciation was an outcome of the mentorship that Leon did not anticipate. Leon felt honored and humbled that Malik choice to join Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. just as he did as an undergraduate. Like the other mentorships in the study, their mentorship mutually reciprocal in its beneficial outcomes for both participants.

Malik (mentee). At the time of the interviews, Malik was a 20-year old junior at Urban University. After attending college for one year at a smaller public institution near his hometown, Malik transferred to Urban University before his sophomore year. During the collection of the data on this study Malik became a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., which is an experience that he now shares with his mentor, Leon. He is now in his final year at Urban University and is exploring the possibilities of attending graduate school.

When reflecting on mentoring experiences with Leon and the outcomes from the experience. Malik explained:

> My biggest thing was seeing somebody that was an educated male. You know, like yourself or something like that. Most of us kind of [come] from…it's kind of hard to imagine yourself in fields that are dominated mostly by Caucasians or mostly dominated by another ethnicity and I just feel like seeing that—it helped me to know what I wanted to do.

In addition to their talks about Blackness and manhood, Malik viewed Leon as role model who been where he attended to go in life. Malik expressed how fortunate he felt to have the campus mentorship program pair him with Leon.

Although Leon now lives in another Midwestern city, Malik remains in frequent contact with his old mentor who helped him broaden and reaffirm his views of Blackness. As previously stated throughout this study, Malik remains consciously aware and outwardly proud of his Blackness. Maintaining his Black identity within the whiteness of Urban University remains very important to him as a self-proclaimed "Trap Scholar" who embodies the counter-narrative of young Black males who are depicted as unmotivated and anti-intellectual. As he explains, "white people act different from Black people. And it's like we have to be on our grind more, we have to strive better to prove a point."

James (mentee). At the time of the study James was a 21-year old junior at Urban University who participated in various campus activities at Urban University. James graduated with his Bachelors of Science degree in Sports Management. Although James earned his degree in Sports Management and expressed a desire to become a head football coach at either the college or professional level, he currently works full-time for a telecommunications company as a customer consultant. He also earns money working as a freelance disc jockey. As result of his campus activities, including his work-study position in the Urban University's Office of Admissions, many faculty/staff at Urban University encouraged James to consider attending graduate school to study Student Affairs—an option that remains in consideration. Additionally, James still maintains communication with Mr. Scott. During Urban University's annual Black Congratulatory Ceremony, he publically recognized and thanked Mr. Scott for his support and credited him with pushing him towards graduating.

Chris (mentee). At the time of the study, Chris was 23 years old and had recently graduated from Research University the previous May. Chris has now graduated from his master's program in Philanthropic Studies and works on the East Coast for a non-profit organization specializing economic and educational inequities. Chris' undergraduate experience at Research University largely consisted of student activism that challenged the status quo practiced by the institution's leadership. These experiences led Chris to pursue academic and career endeavors that involved service and providing resources for important community causes. Chris also maintains frequent contact with his mentor Lando. They both now consider themselves as colleagues and equals rather than mentor and mentee.

Author (mentee). At the time of the study Author was a very confident, yet soft-spoken, 21 year old junior at Research University who was pursuing a B.A. in Ethnomusicology. Author

is now graduate student studying Ethnomusicology. More than any other undergraduate participant in the study, Author benefited from numerous mentorships from faculty, staff, and doctoral graduates students. As previously mentioned, Author's affinity for Southern cultural values and customs is part of what made him connect with his mentor Lando, who was also from the South. The two maintain communication. Lando now holds a full-time administrative position on campus.

Jefferies (mentee). At the time of the study Jefferies was a 23-year old communications major who had recently completed his fifth year at Urban University. During his interview, Jefferies said that he experienced some "ups and downs" when describing his academic experience at Urban University. Jefferies academic challenges continued following the collection of his narratives. The university academically dismissed Jefferies due to unsatisfactory academic progress. After a year of reflection and continued consultation with me, Jefferies applied for reinstatement and is now three semester away from graduating with his degree. He expressed a renewed sense of purpose and has a strong desire to finish his academic pursuits.

My mentorship with Jefferies continues and our communication is frequent. We continue to work on life and academic goals together. He has experienced successes and setbacks, which has been a source of conversation and reflection. The experience has reminded me of the importance of patience and the need to listen in mentoring. It is my hope to continue to encourage him to finish his degree and I am committed to assisting him in every aspect that I can. I remain at Urban University directing a student success program with a mission of serving underrepresented students of color.

Epilogue

"I've been there before." The participants, including myself, mentioned this phrase multiple times during the study. As such, this memorable phrase strongly resonates with my experience in capturing the narratives of the men in this study. My initial goal at the start of this project was to research my experience. I wanted to capture and better understand the mentorships that were extremely beneficial to me as an undergraduate and later as a program director at a predominately-White Institution (PWI). I believed that these relationships supported my growth as a young Black man. My mentorships with older Black men on campus helped me understand and navigate the treacherous terrain of my undergraduate institution. As a staff person and administrator at a PWI for 10 years, I have participated in similar mentorships from the opposite end of the dyad—the mentor.

Most prior research on mentorships involving undergraduate Black men at PWIs did not fully consider or include the experiences of both participants in the mentorship dyad. The participants in this study revealed the unique experiences of Black men at PWIs that include the perspectives of undergraduate, graduate, and professional Black men within the context of their individual experiences and shared experiences within their respective mentorships. The idea that "I've been there before" speaks to the desire of the mentor to provide support to their mentees. More importantly, the quote speaks to their belief that their advice and support is paramount due to their unique, shared experiences as Black men.

The men in this study demonstrated their consciousness regarding their individual and collective experiences as Black men at PWI. They also demonstrated courage and candor in providing their voice and narrative in sharing their lived experiences as marginalized and oppressed people. I am most impressed with the courage and candor of the mentees who saw

their participation in the study as a means to counter the prevailing misconstrued stereotypes of Black men in college. Likewise, I am impressed with the collective responsibility that the mentors took in helping and guiding their mentees through their undergraduate experience. I learned that our shared sense of responsibility to these young men was rooted in knowing that each of us shared similar experiences of having older Black men who supported our needs during our developmental years. Furthermore, the mentors understood that it was partially our responsibility to help our mentees understand the racism and the environment around them.

Conducting this study evoked feelings of anger, sadness, happiness, and affirmation. I felt angry when hearing the mentees describe their experiences of feeling negatively stereotyped and marginalized by both their peers and members of the institution that included faculty and staff. I felt sadness when hearing how the mentees described their internal conflict when wrestling with their personal desires to maintain their authentic selves despite pressures to conform and assimilate to a more dominate White culture. I felt happiness when hearing their stories of success despite these harsh, unfair circumstances. I felt happiness when hearing their counter-narratives that rejected the false rhetoric regarding their intellectual abilities and desires for success. I felt feeling of affirmation when hearing the narratives of the mentors who shared my same passion and personal responsibility to assist our mentees in whatever way possible. I felt affirmation in knowing that their passion and sense of responsibility came from not only a shared similar experience, but also because individuals had done it for us. As a result, the men in this study challenged me to take great care in analyzing and constructing their narratives for the purpose of this study.

Black men's narratives are unique and diverse. For me, this research experience illuminated the idea that Black men are not a monolithic group, rather Black men represent a

wide range of varied experiences, backgrounds, and ideas that are unique and rich in context. It was important within this study to provide the participants' narratives that pointed out their shared similarities without the cost of over generalizing their experiences and thoughts in a way that further perpetuated research practices that leads to generalized assumptions and stereotypes.

As such, it was important to highlight that although there were similarities in their experiences, each of the participants were unique individuals whose personalities were distinctive. Likewise, although the mentors shared similar personal convictions regarding supporting young Black men on campus, which related to their motive to mentor, each of the mentors' approaches and philosophies towards mentoring young Black men were distinctive.

The use of critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework proved to be invaluable during my research. As a guiding theoretical framework, CRT's literature provided the tools to analyze and critique the experiences of the participants and fundamentally addresses and illuminate the participants' experiences of racism at their PWI. CRT provided the appropriate language to describe my interpretations of the participants' nuanced experiences and narratives. Likewise, CRT provided the structure and ability to conduct research about Black men, with consideration of myself as an active participant in the study. This allowed the distinctions between the participants to emerge more clearly. It was my desire to illuminate such distinctions in their narratives. Consequently, it is my hope that this research helps predominately-White institutions operate with intentionality in addressing the needs of Black men who attend and work at their respective institutions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Mentee Email Invitation

Greetings [Person],

I am reaching out to you for assistance in identifying potential students to participate in my research study.

I am currently conducting a study that explores the mentoring experiences of undergraduate African American males and their mentors. I am looking for students to participate in interviews to share their mentoring experiences. Participants will be asked to complete a demographic survey and participate in one or more 60-minute interviews.

In order to participate, students must meet the following criteria:

- Identify as Black/African American
- Be currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at a predominately white institution (college/university)
- Has participated during their undergraduate education in a formal or informal mentoring experience as a mentee/protégé

If you are a student or know of any students who are potential participants for this study, please forward this email to them and ask them to contact me at ericwill@iupui.edu or 219-688-6259.

Thank you for your assistance. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best,

Eric D. Williams

ericwill@iupui.edu

Appendix B: Mentor Email Invitation

Greetings [Mentor],

I am reaching out to you for participation in my dissertation study.

I am currently conducting a research exploring the mentoring experiences of undergraduate African American males and their mentors.

[Undergraduate African American male] has identified you as his mentor during his undergraduate college experience. I am asking both members of the mentoring experience to participate in an interview to share their mentoring experiences. Participants will be asked to complete a demographic survey and participate in one or more 60-minute interviews.

In order to participate, mentors must meet the following criteria:

- Has participated in a formal or informal mentoring experience involving an undergraduate African American male as his mentor

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me at ericwill@iupui.edu or 317-274-2958.

Thank you for your assistance. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best,

Eric D. Williams

ericwill@indiana.edu

Appendix C: Participants Demographic Questionnaire

1. Please provide a pseudonym (false name) that will be used to refer to you or your story/experience throughout the remainder of data collection and analysis

2. What is your academic standing (e.g. freshman) and/or status (e.g. faculty/staff) at your institution?

3. Race/Ethnicity:

4. How many mentoring experiences have you experienced?

5. What is the educational level of your mother?

6. What is the educational level of your father?

7. Did you grow up in an urban or rural environment?

8. How many parents or guardians were in your household when you were growing up?

Appendix D: Mentee Interview Protocol

How does the mentorship dyad support the needs of undergraduate Black males at PWIs?

Lead Question:

Tell me what it is like for you at your institution?

Possible Follow-up questions:

1. Tell me how you chose this institution
2. Please tell me a story that describes your experiences as a Black male at your institution?
3. Who is your personal support system while in college?
4. Tell me how your institution supports you or does not support you?
5. Tell me about the needs of Black males at your institution
6. Describe the typical experiences of other Black males at your institution?

7. How does your experience compare to other Black male at your institution?

8. Tell me how your institution can learn more about the needs of Black males

How do undergraduate African American male student mentees and their mentors at Predominately White Institutions describe a successful mentoring experience?

Lead Question:

Tell me a story about your mentoring experience?

Possible follow-up questions:

1. What makes mentoring experience worth your time?

2. Describe the perfect mentor for you?

3. How did you get connected to your mentor?

4. Tell me what you expect from the experience

5. Tell me how your mentor would describe you?

6. Tell me how you mentor would describe the experience?

How does the dyad foster the exchange of information between the mentor and mentee?

Lead question:

Tell me something that you learned during your mentoring experience

Possible follow-up questions:

1. How were you welcomed and treated in the relationship

2. Describe your relationship with your mentor

3. Tell me a story of a typical encounter with your mentor

4. Tell me something that [mentor] learned from having you as a mentee

5. Tell me a story about your mentoring experience in which both of you learned something from one another.

How do the predispositions and personal characteristics (race, age, gender, class, etc.) of both participants influence the dyadic relationship?

Lead question:

Tell me you think of society's images of Black males?

Possible follow-up questions:

1. What are the stereotypes of Black males?

2. Tell me how would you describe race and racism on campus?

3. Tell me how race and gender influence mentoring relationships

4. Tell me how your race and gender influences your mentoring experience?

5. Tell me your advice in mentoring a Black male?

CLOSING

I will follow-up with you by e-mail if there are questions that need additional clarification. Once this interview is transcribed, the transcripts will be available to you so that you can make revisions as necessary. I would like to thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study!

Appendix E: Mentor Interview Protocol

How do undergraduate African American male student mentees and their mentors at Predominately White Institutions describe a successful mentoring experience?

Lead Question: Tell me a story about your mentoring experience?

Possible follow-up questions:

7. What makes the mentoring experience worth your time?
8. Describe the perfect mentee for you?
9. How did you get connected to your mentee?
10. Tell me what you expect from the experience
11. Tell me what your mentee expected from the experience
12. Tell me how your mentee would describe you?
13. Tell me how you mentee would describe the experience?

How does the mentorship dyad support the needs of undergraduate Black males at PWIs?

Lead Question: Tell me what it is like for your mentee at your institution?

Possible Follow-up questions:

9. Please tell me a story that describes your mentee experiences at your institution?
10. Tell me support systems at for Black males at your institution
11. Tell me about the needs of Black males at your institution
12. Tell me how your institutions supports or does not support Black males?
13. How does the experiences of Black males at your institution compare to your mentee?

14. Tell me how the institution can learn more about the support and needs of Black males

How does the dyad foster the exchange of information between the mentor and mentee?

Lead question: Tell me something that you learned during your mentoring experience

Possible follow-up questions:

6. How were you welcomed and treated in the relationship
7. Describe your relationship with your mentee
8. Tell me a story of a typical encounter with your mentee
9. Tell me something that your mentee learned from having you as a mentor
10. Tell me a story about your mentoring experience in which both of you learned something from one another.

How do the predispositions and personal characteristics (race, age, gender, class, etc.) of both participants influence the dyadic relationship?

Lead question: Tell me you think of society's images of Black males?

Possible follow-up questions:

6. What do you think of stereotypes?
7. Tell me how would you describe race and racism?
8. Tell me how race and gender influences the relationships
9. Tell me how race and gender influences mentoring experiences?
10. Tell me your advice in mentoring a Black male?

CLOSING

I will follow-up with you by e-mail if there are questions that need additional clarification. Once this interview is transcribed, the transcripts will be available to you so that you can make revisions as necessary. I would like to thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study!

Curriculum Vita

Eric D. Williams
ericwill@iupui.edu

Educational Background

Ph. D., Candidate, Doctoral Experience August 2010-Present
Higher Education and Student Affairs
Minor: Cultural Studies
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Master of Science, May 2007
Higher Education and Student Affairs
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

Bachelor of Science, December 2004
Secondary Education: social studies concentration in grade levels 5-12
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
State of Indiana Social Studies Secondary Education Teacher's License (February 9, 2004 – February 9, 2010)

Professional Experience

Diversity Enrichment and Achievement Program, Program Director
2014-present: IUPUI

- Develop short-term and long-term strategies that adhere to the mission and vision of the program
- Select, supervise, and train the DEAP professional and student staff
- Develop, oversee, and asses retention and success initiatives for program
- Provide daily attendance reports during the Summer Experience & Bridge Program
- Participated in campus wide initiatives and committee related to recruitment, persistence and graduation of students of color

Indiana University Groups Scholars Program, Doctoral Graduate Assistant & Associate Instructor
2010-present: Indiana University-Bloomington

- Instructor for X152 (Introduction to the University): Education Learning Community
- Supervise & oversee the Groups Ambassadors program
- Facilitate retention and success initiatives for male and female academically at-risk students
- Provide daily attendance reports during the Summer Experience & Bridge Program
- Participated as co-instructor and chaperone for Ghana Study Abroad Course (2011 & 2012)

Office of Student Success, Student African American Brotherhood, Academic Counselor & Program Coordinator
*2008-2010: IUPUI (*Additional Service: IUPUI Summer Bridge 2011, 2012, &2013 Diversity Enrichment & Achievement Program)*

- Provided academic advising and career development services for SAAB student participants
- Implemented the program's academic curriculum and mission towards improved retention of African American males
- Mentored the program's male student participants and advised the student organization component
- Developed and provided personal development and leadership opportunities
- Developed professional networking opportunities

Student Support Services (SSS), Academic Counselor
2008-2010: IUPUI
- Provided career and personal advising to first-generation, low-income, and at-risk students
- Coordinated the SSS peer mentoring component of the office
- Supervised SSS peer mentors
- Developed and conducted academic and personal development workshops
- Coordinated the social, educational, and cultural activities for first-year students
- Mentored students for the STAR Mentoring program and the Norman Brown Diversity and Leadership program

University College and Housing & Residence Life, Joint Academic Advisor
2007-2008: IUPUI
- Provided advising for first and second-year students living in campus housing
- Assisted in the training of the Residence Life Staff in matters related to academic advising
- Assisted in the development of the IUPUI Housing Living Your Freshman Experience (LYFE) Scholars Program
- Assisted in supervising the Housing & Residence Life academic mentors (LYFE Leaders)

Groups Student Support Services Federal TRIO program, Graduate Assistantship
2006-2007: Indiana University-Bloomington
- Lead instructor for X152 (Introduction to the University): Educational Learning Community
- Supervised the program's Student Ambassadors
- Participated in information sessions about college admissions for High School seniors throughout Indiana
- Created and facilitated continuous programs for African American and Latino males, including the "Brothers' &
- Sisters' Circle": A mentoring program for the Thomas I. Atkins African American Living Learning Community.

Residential Programs & Services, Groups Summer Experience Graduate Resident Assistant
Summer 2006: Indiana University-Bloomington
- Co-created and organized the first annual GROUPS Student Professional Conference
- Organized social and community programming throughout the summer
- Provided weekly reports on the status of the Summer Experience to the GROUPS director
- Conducted academic advising for at-risk students throughout the summer

- Facilitated programming geared towards the program's men of color.

Auxiliary Services & Programs, Graduate Assistantship with joint responsibilities
2005-2006: Indiana University-Bloomington
--Residential Programs and Services Component & --Indiana Memorial Student Union Recreation Center Component

- Conducted recruitment for underrepresented student staff positions for housing
- Collected research data to assess the perceptions of underrepresented students within housing.
- Conducted Residence Hall in-service training regarding underrepresented student staff & residents.
- Provided diversity training for professional staff about issues concerning underrepresented students.

Additional Experience

Parent Fund Survey "In Their Own Words: African American Students' Perceptions about Their Social Experiences at Indiana University," Graduate Research Assistant
2006-2007: Indiana University-Bloomington

- Recruited student subjects to participate in focus GROUPS and individual interviews.
- Created reports on observations from group and individual interviews.
- Conducted a literature review of African American Greek-Letter organizations.
- Presented the research findings at the 2007 ACPA/NASPA Joint Conference (Orlando, Fl.)

Groups Student Support Services Federal TRIO program, Graduate Practicum
Spring 2006: Indiana University

- Assisted in the coordination of the student advising and tutoring services.
- Coordinated the GROUPS Student Professional Conference
- Participated in mentoring the program's first-year men of color
- Created and conducted an assessment survey given to the GROUPS program first-year students.

Selected Teaching Experience

- Summer 2014-16: UCOL-U110 (Summer Bridge and First-Year Seminar), Lead instructor
- Fall 2012-13: Education-X152 (Education Learning Community & First-Year Seminar), Lead Instructor
- Summer 2011-2012: OVST-Q497 (A Transatlantic Experience: Studying the Triangular Slave Trade), Co-Instructor
- Spring 2012: EDUC-U212 (Group Conversation on Racism), Co-instructor
- Fall 2011:COLL--G123 (Success for Groups Students: Defining & Achieving Success), Lead Instructor
- Summer 2011: UCOL-U110 (Ben Davis University Bridge Program Learning Community), Co-Instructor
- Fall 2010: Coll--G123 (Groups Student Leadership & Success Seminar), Lead Instructor
- Fall 2007-09: Learning Community-U110 (African American Student Perspectives), Team Instructor

- Fall 2006: Education-X152 (Introduction to the University), Lead Instructor
  Fall 2006: HPER-F255 (Human Sexuality, Prof. William Y.), Discussion Leader

Selected Research & Publication Experience

- Journal of College Student Development (JCSD)
  JCSD Publication Review Team Member (2012-present)
- Fraternity-Sorority Experience Survey (2012)
  Principle Investigator: Dr. Vasti Torres
- Ghana Project: The impact of the Ghana Study Abroad Experience (2011, 2012)
  Principle Investigators: Dr. Nancy Chism & Dr. Vasti Torres
- Study of African American Undergraduates at Traditionally White Institution (2006)
  Principle Investigator: Dr. Gilbert Brown

Selected Conference Presentations

- Williams, E., Johnson, M., Lee, D.L., & Bigham, M. (2017, February). "Racial Tension: Finding and Accepting Reality in the Campus Community." Presented at the Indiana Association for College Admission Counseling Annual Admission and Financial Aid Congress, Indianapolis, IN
- Williams, E. (2014, February). "Manifest Your Destiny: Defining & Achieving Your Success as a Man." Presented at the Black Brown & College Bound Summit, Tampa, FL
- Williams, E. (2012, November). "Manifest Your Destiny: Defining & Achieving Your Success as a Man." Presented at the National Learning Community Conference, Indianapolis, IN.
- Turner, R., Williams (2012, November) "Pathways to Power: A Conversation With Students." Presented at the National Learning Community Conference, Indianapolis, IN.
- Darnel, C., Ferguson, T., Snipes, J. & Williams, E. (2011, November). "Reclaiming Our Purpose: The relevance of Race-Based Student Organizations". Presented at the Men & Women of Color Leadership Conference, Bloomington, IN
- Browning, B., Turner, R. & Williams, E. (2011, March): "Race-Themed Learning Community: Challenges and Rewards". Presented at the Indiana Student Access and Success Conference, Indianapolis, IN
- Ferguson, T. & Williams, E. (2011, February): "Professional as Mentors: Help Needed". Presented at the Indiana University First-Year Experience Conference, Bloomington, IN
- Littlefield, M., Turner, R. & Williams, E. (2010, November). "Race-Themed Learning Community: Challenges and Rewards". Presented at the National Learning Communities Conference, Bay City, MI
- Isom, V., Malone, W., & Williams, E., (2006, November). "GROUPS Student Professional Conference: Stepping Stones to Success." Presented at the 2006 Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MAEOPP) professional conference, Indianapolis, IN.
- Brown, G., Heeter, A., Ingram, T. & Williams, E. (2007, April). "Guests in Their Own House: An Ethnographic Study of African American Undergraduates at a Traditionally White Institution." Presented at the ACPA/NASPA joint meeting, Orlando, FL

Selected Taskforce and Committee Experience

- 2016 Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor: "Hispanic/Latino(a) Recruitment and Retention Taskforce"
- 2015-2016 Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor: "African-American Recruitment and Retention Taskforce"
- 2014-2016 Division of Undergraduate Education: "University College Diversity Committee"
- 2011 IU Office of Enrollment Management: "Underrepresented Minority Recruitment Committee"
- 2007 IUPUI Black Faculty & Staff Council: "Student Initiates with the Young Gifted & Black Program"
- 2005-2006 IU Residential Programs & Services: "Underrepresented Student Staff of Color Workgroup"
- 2006 IU Higher Education & Student Affairs: "Outreach Committee"
- 2004-2005 IU Student Activities Office: "Underrepresented Student Organization Space Committee"

Selected Student Leadership and Development Experience

- 2013-present Groups Scholars Program STEM Student Organization, Indiana University, Campus Advisor
- 2008-present Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Indiana State Director for the Great Lakes Region 2008
- 2008-2010 Student African American Brother (SAAB) at IUPUI, Program Coordinator & Academic Advisor
- 2007-present Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (Alpha Epsilon Alpha Chapter at IUPUI), Faculty/Staff Advisor
- 2006-2007 Indiana University Black Student Union, Graduate Advisor
- 2006-2007 Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (Epsilon Iota Chapter at Indiana University), Graduate Advisor

Organizational Affiliations

- Critical Race Studies in Education Association (CRSEA)
- Association of College Personnel Administrators (ACPA)
- Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity (MAEOPP)
- Indiana TRIO (I-TRIO), formerly I-MAEOPP
- Black Graduate Student Association
- Indiana University Black Student Union
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.